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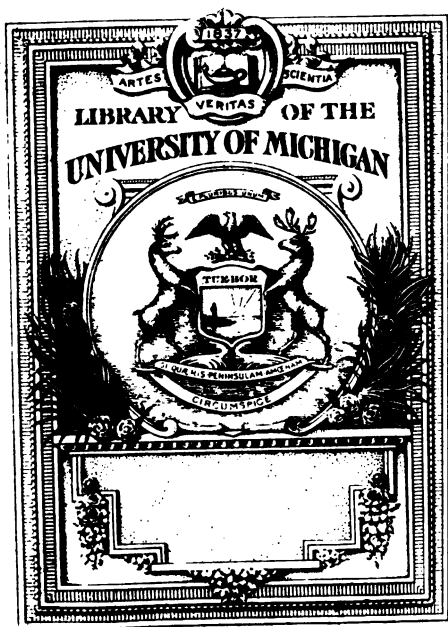
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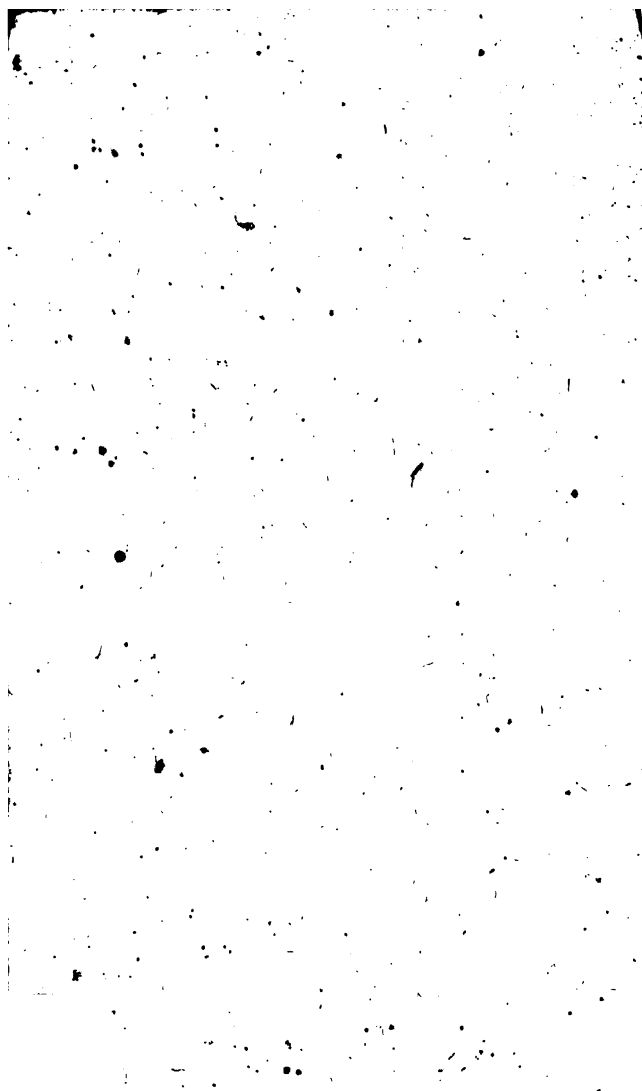


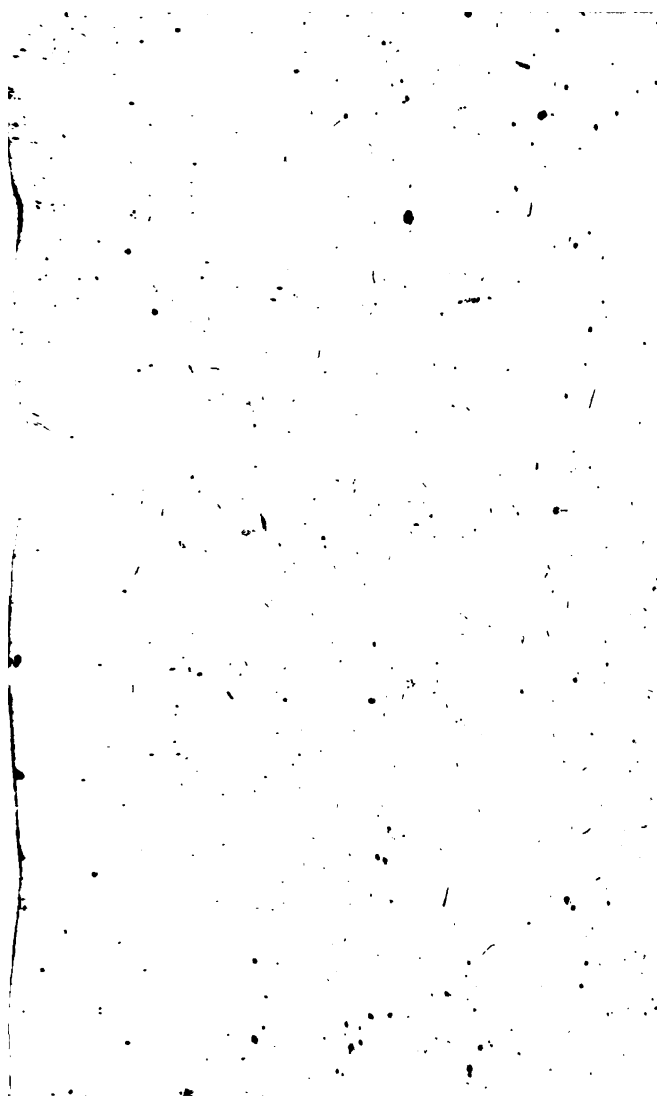
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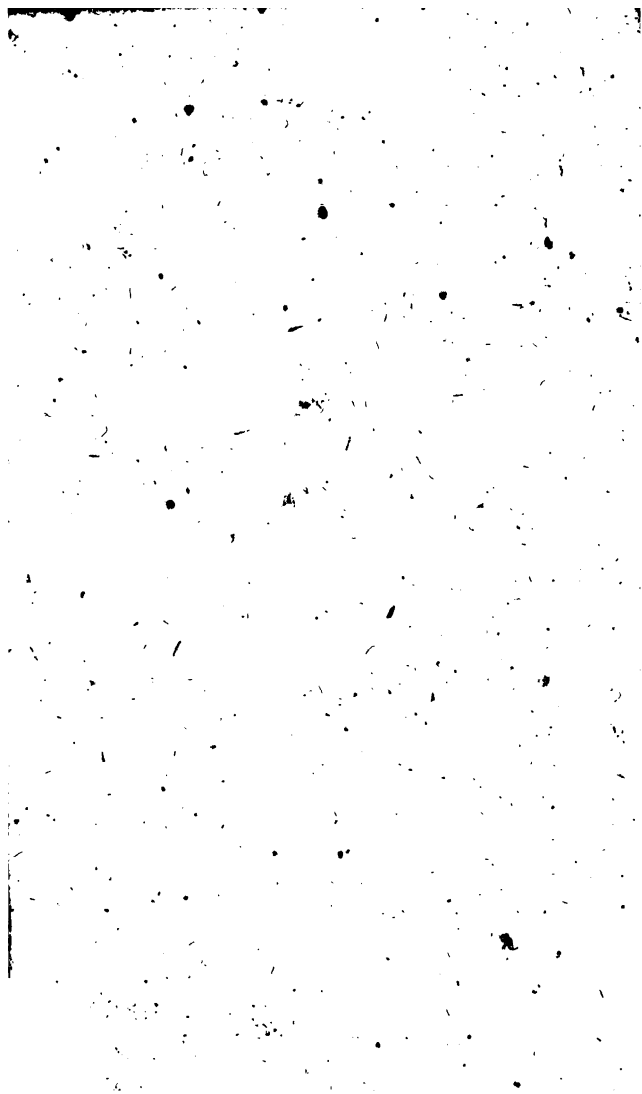
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An Advertisement.

WE have given to this Volume the Title of *The Third Volume of Moral Essays*, because the design we had of joyning to the same Work, and under the same Title, the Treatises which had appeared under that of the *Education of a Prince*, and of Composing a second Volume of E SAYS, being Publish- ed, this here, which, with-

A 2

out

out that, would have been
but the Second, is now the
Third.

'Tis in Consideration of re-
ducing under this same Title
all the Treatises which are
of the same nature, that we
have added to this a small
Writing of Plays, whereof we
had a Right to Dispose, al-
though some persons had al-
ready inserted it in other
Works. And we have been
by so much more inclinable
thereunto, as these Works
were less common. It hath
not quite lost the Grace of
Novelty, beside that we have
taken an Occasion to Cor-
rect it in divers places, and
to

to add thereunto likewise
something.

There is yet another Treatise, which is that of *Divers ways wherein God is Tempted*, of which there might have been a Part seen under another Form, but it is so changed and augmented that one would say it is absolutely new, or rather that it appears here under its natural Shape and Form, whereas it was, as it were, Disguised in the other.

It would be to no purpose to Note by what Accident these TREATISES have been made, seeing that it is not this Occasion which

can render them useful,
the Publick Judging thereof
for the most part only ac-
cording to the Relation they
have to its Disposition and
Relish.

and shall be a great help
to the Publick Judging thereof
for the most part only ac-
cording to the Relation they
have to its Disposition and
Relish. **A**

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to the Publick Judging thereof
for the most part only ac-
cording to the Relation they
have to its Disposition and
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A T A B L E

Of the Treatises contain'd in this
Volume.

First P A R T.

OF the Knowledge of ones self,

First Part.

Of the Knowledge of ones self; Se-
cond Part.

II Treatise.

Of Charity and Self-Love.

III Treatise.

Of the divers ways wherein God is
tempted.

IV Treatise.

Of Plays.

V Treatise.

Of Reports.

VI Treatise.

Of the Remedy against Suspicion.

VII Treatise.

That we must not be scandalized at
Pious Mens faults.

VIII Treatise.

The means of profiting by bad Ser-
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The Orphan, by Mr. O'Connell, in the Prose.

Theodosius, or the Force of Love.



Moral Essays.

First Treatise.

Of the Knowledge of ones self.

First Part.



1. **T**HE most common Precept of *Pagan* and *Christian* Philosophy is this, which Orders us to know our selves; and there is nothing in which men agree more then in the Precept of this Duty. 'Tis one of those sensible
B Truths

2. *Of the Knowledge*

Truths, which hath no need of Proofs, and which finds in all men a heart which acknowledges them, and a light which approves them. How agreeable soever we imagin the Illusion of a man who is deceived in the *Idea*, which he hath of him self, we find it always unfortunate to be deceived, and we are on the contrary struck with the Sentiment, which a Poet. hath expressed in these Verses

*Illi Mors gravis Incubat,
Qui natus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur sibi.*

2. We must set a greater value on these Principles in which men find themselves united by an unanimous Consent, because that seldom happens to them, being always by their vain and malignant humours inclin'd to contradict one another upon the least occasion; every one having a desire either to disparage others, or to distinguish himself from them, in saying something that is new and not following simply the common Tract: So Truth must be very clear, when stifling this Inclination it forces them to reunite themselves in some Maxim. 'Tis that which happens in respect of this. For there hath not been

a Philosopher who hath opposed it, and who hath pretended that man ought to avoid knowing himself. What if some one hath passed even to this excess? he cannot do it but by supposing that Man is so unfortunate, and that his Evils are so without remedy, that he could not but encrease his Misery by knowing himself. And so one should always know ones self, even to conclude by this strange way of Arguing, *That it is good not to know ones self.*

3. But that which is very strange is, that being so united to grant the Importance of this Duty— they are still far from practicing it. For, not labouring seriously to obtain this knowledge, they are hardly employed all their life, but with care how to shun it. Nothing is more odious to them than this light; which discovers them to their proper eyes, and which obliges them to see themselves such as they are. Thus they do all things to hide it from themselves, and they establish their quiet in living ignorantly and in the forgetfulness of their State and Condition.

4. A great Wit of this Age hath shewn, in an excellent Discourse, that this desire to avoid the knowledge of

ones self is the Fountain of all the tumultuous occupations of men, and above all, of that which they call *Divertisement*; That they seek in that only to rob themselves of themselves; That it sufficeth to render a man Miserable to oblige him to consider himself, and that there is no human Felicity in this World which is able to endure this consideration. Thus Man without Grace is so great a punishment to himself, that he inclines continually to fly from himself, that he looks upon himself in some sort as his own great Enemy, and that he thinks his happiness consists in being forgetful of himself, and running head-long into this forgetfulness.

5. This Inclination is not only the effect of an evil Custom, nor of a particular disorder amongst some men; it's the general propensity of our corrupt Nature. We are out of our selves from the very moment of our Birth, and the Soul, which in her infancy doth only busy herself with outward things and the Pleasures of the Body, doth hereby render these Objects and Pleasures so familiar to her, and cleaves so strongly to them, that she cannot enter again into herself, but by great trouble and violence

lence. And as she finds not there what she desires, she freeth herself the soonest she can, and Melancholy inclines her to return presently to those other Objects, to which she applies herself with so much more eagerness, by how much more they assist her to forget her interior Miseries, the sight whereof she cannot undergo. *Projicit se foras miserabiliter scalpi avide Contactu sensibilium.*

6. But not to urge any farther that this not knowing ones self must not be countenanced, and the better to dive to the bottom thereof; there must be added, that this knowledge is joyn'd in man to an inclination which appears quite contrary, and which makes him to regard himself in every thing. Because the greatest Pleasure of a proud man is to contemplate the *Idea* which he makes of himself. This *Idea* is the *Origin* of all his vain satisfactions: He relates all to it, and nothing pleaseth him but in proportion as it contributes to puff it up, to adorn it, and to render it more lively.

7. These two inclinations, whereof the one makes us to fly, and the other to seek the knowledge of our selves, are alike natural to a man; so spring they

from the same Fountain, tho' in appearance they are opposite.

Man, as being vain, will see himself. He avoids seeing himself, because being vain he is not able to suffer the sight of his Faults and Miseries. To accord these two contrary desires, he hath recourse to a Subtility worthy his Vanity, which gives him means to satisfy them both at the same time. This Craft or Subtility is to cover all his Faults, to blot them, in some sort, out of the Image which he hath formed of himself, and only to include therein the qualities which may raise him in his own thoughts. If he hath them not effectively, he hath them imaginarily, and if he find them not in his proper person, he endeavours to seek them in the opinion of men, or in outward things which he joyns to his *Idea*, as if they made some part thereof; by means of this deceit he is always absent from himself, and present to himself: He looks upon himself continually, and never sees himself truly, because he sees, instead of himself, only the vain Phantomes he hath formed thereof.

8. So when a *Caribian* represents himself to himself, he only sees a certain

tain figure resembling the image which he hath seen of himself in the water; and beholding it as exact in Shooting, as dexterous in Fishing, as Master of a certain Cabin, as having slain such and such of his Enemies, as Husband to such a Woman, he applies himself absolutely to these Objects and *Ideas* which renew them, and thus he passeth his whole life without reflecting on that part of his being which thinks and reasoneth, not dreaming what it is, from whence it came, what will become of it, what may cause its good or bad Fortune.

It is not to be imagined that the Pride of other men acts otherways then this of these miserable people. They adorn only this Image, which is the object of their love a little more. A Captain looking on himself sees a Phantome on Horse back, who commands some Soldiers. A Prince sees a man richly cloathed, who is looked on with respect, and who is obeyed every where. A Magistrate sees a man dressed up with the Ornaments belonging to his Dignity, who is respected by others, because he is in a condition to oblige or disoblige them. A vain proud Woman looks on herself as an Idol, Char-

ming by her Beauty those who behold her. An Usurer sees himself in the midst of his Treasures. An Ambitious man represents himself surrounded with people who humble themselves at his Greatness. And so every one in all these actions have no other end, whereof self-love is the Original, but to joyn always to the *Idea* that they have of themselves, new Ornaments and new Titles.

9. There is also a more spiritual *Idea* one hath of himself, which is, when not conceiving distinctly either good or bad qualities, one conceives only what is expressed by the word *Me*; and this word conceived in this manner doth likewise hide from us all our faults, and doth suffice to gain our love. The secret apprehension we have thereof creeps in every where; we relate all thereto; this is the principle of the most part of Pleasures that we enjoy. And though we should come to unfold or unravel what this *Me* comprehends, we should find therein nothing lovely, and may be nothing which would not give horror; nevertheless we love it under this so confused *Idea* of *Me*, and we shun in it the distinct and particular

cular apprehension which makes us hate it.

10. From whence think you proceeds this trouble, which overwhelms those who have been in great places when forced to live at quiet in their own houses? It is not only because they see themselves too clearly, and that the apprehension they have of their Miseries and Faults doth trouble them. Perchance that is one of the reasons of their Melancholy, but not the only one. It is also because they do not see themselves throughly, and that there are few things which renew the *Idea* of their *Me*. This *Idea* causeth their pleasure during their fortune, and its loss their displeasure during their disgrace: we love not to employ our selves in solitude; the Images which we form there are infinitely more obscure then those aided by outward Objects. Men in great Employments are advertised by all those who address themselves to them, that they are Powerful, that they are able to hurt or to assist. A thousand things doth stir up lively the *Idea* of their *Me*, and sets it before their eyes with some agreeable and pleasing quality of *Great*, *Powerful*, and of *Respect*. Common Civility does the

same thing in respect of those who live in the world. For as it is Fill'd with Testimonials of Esteem, with Respect, and with Applications, it gives occasion of representing themselves to themselves, as being loved and esteemed, and by consequence as being lovely and esteemable. And by a contrary reason these deserts and solitudes do vex and trouble vain and ambitious men, because they do not speak to them of themselves, and because they would have them speak of nothing else.

11. There is a pleasure in hearing Self-love speak when it is not disguised at all, and that it discovers lively, what pleaseth it in difficult occupations, wherewith it chargeth men. There is scarcely, for example, any more laborious than those who speak in publick, as Traitors and Advocates : they are obliged to charge their memories with a thousand unpleasing affairs, and apply themselves to find out devices and expressions to fill up their discourses, to drain the forces of their bodies, and their Spirits, upon matters which they shall be glad to forget, as soon as they shall be discharged of their Offices. Nevertheless, because there are many things in their professions, which
renews

renews the *Idea* of themselves; those who exercise them with Honor, think themselves the happiest of men. Let us but hear what one of these antient Orators upon this subject said, to judge of what the rest maintain. "What

*Quintil.
dis. Orat.*

"is there more sweet, said he, to an honest man, born for honest pleasures, than to see his House always full of people, and to know that they render him these respects, not because of his Riches, nor out of hopes of being his Heirs; nor because of some Office he enjoys, but in respect of himself; that even those to whom we give respect, in hopes to be their Heirs, those who are the richest, and the most in credit do come to see him, although oftentimes he be young & poor, to the end, that they may recommend to him their own, or their friends concerns? Is there any thing in Riches, and Grandeur, which can give pleasure equal to that which he feels; when he sees persons considerable for their age, and whose credit is spread through all the world, to confess in the abundance of Riches which they enjoy, that they have not the first and greatest of all worldly advantages,

"ges ; which is that which an Ora-
 "tor professeth? What shall I say of
 "that throng of people, who present
 "themselves to accompany him, or
 "who go before him? What shall I say
 "of the splendor with which he appears
 "in publick, of the respect given him in
 "mens opinions; of the joy which he
 "conceives, when being raised to speak
 "singly in the midst of a throng of peo-
 "ple, who listen 'to him attentively, he
 "sees the eyes of all the Auditors turn'd
 "towards him : That the people crowd
 "to hear him, and that he stamps in all
 "their minds the same Impressions, which
 "he desires to make appear in himself.

Behold what made this Roman under-
 gt the troubles and dis gusts of his pro-
 fession. And if all those who are in o-
 ther dangerous and painful employments
 speak as simply as he ; they would tell
 us also, that all that pleased them there-
 in, is reduced to this *Idea* of their *Me*
 honoured and respected by others.

12. We see cleerly enough by these
 examples, in what fashion Self-love
 makes use of outward objects, to satisfy
 these two inclinations natural to men of
 knowing. and not knowing himself, not
 suffering on the one part, that he see
 himself otherwise, than by a confused

Idea,

Idea, which represents to him no one fault; and adding thereto on the other part, all that he can of exterior things, which give him means to fix there unto a phantastick Image of Greatness. But this nevertheless doth not suffice man to procure him the rest; and the pleasure which he seeks, nor to avoid the knowledge of those faults, whereof he hath so much horror. He hath need of quite other inventions to shun the sight of himself. In vain would he publish himself abroad, he would not fail to find himself there, and a thousand things would be able to set his faults before his eyes. He would see the Images thereof in all the faults, and in all the miseries of others, which he could not avoid seeing, and which oftentimes he looks on, even with pleasure. So that he would not find his account better out of himself, than in himself. There is great likelihood, that if the fear of seeing himself, had made him go out, the Image of himself, which should have been represented to him by all these outward Objects would have made him to enter again how unwilling soe he might have been.

13. To comprehend better in what manner man may be forced to see himself

self by objects, which are out of him, and what he doth to warrant himself from them it is necessary to consider, that he does not look upon himself less according to a certain being which he hath in the imagination of others, than according to what he really is; and that he does not only draw his portraiture by what he himself knows of himself; but also by the sight which he discovers in the minds of others. Because we are all in respect of one another, as that man who served as a model to the Practitioners in the Academies of Painters. Each of those, who environ us, do form to themselves a portraiture of us, and the different ways wherewith our actions are observed do give leave to make them differently.

The great and the little, those who have a good repute, and those who have none; are hardly distinguished, but because there are more people who draw the Pictures of the one then of the others. How many draw the Portraiture of a Prince? All his Kingdom, all Forreign Countries are for him an Accademy of Painters, whereof he is the Model. Those who are more remote represent him by more gross draughts.

draughts. Those who are nearer do draw his Picture more lively, and more resembling. A mean man, on the contrary, who lives in his Family, is only Painted by the small number of those who know him, and the Portraits which they make of him scarcely go out of the Limit of the Town.

But what is more considerable in this is, that men do not only draw the portraits of others, but that they see also those which are made of them, and if they would look on them indeed, nothing would be so capable to remedy their pride, nor more able to help to undeceive them then; even the sight of these portraits.

Let us choose the greatest and most glorious man in the World, and allow him so great a Wit as to contemplate at once all this variety of Judgments which are made of him, and to enjoy fully the sight of the thoughts and of the motions which he excites in others, there is no vanity can undergo this sight. For a small number of advantageous opinions he would see an infinite which would displease him. He would see that the faults which he dissembles, or which he doth not know, are in the eyes of the
most

most part of people; that they entertain themselves often about no other thing, and that men observe them only in this manner; he would see that the World is very little touched with all these fine qualities with which he flatters himself that some see them not at all, others behold them with a coldness, others only observe that in which they are defective, some hide and disfigure them, joyning thereunto some faults which they know in him, and that from all this he draws his own picture which is only proper to extinguish his Pride.

There needs only to learn to humble our selves, that we open our eyes to all these several opinions men form of us, and Reason, if we desire sincerely to know them, will discover them. But because vanity is an evil whereof we will not be cured, and that we place our happiness not to be cured of it, we make use of an Invention, which how gross soever it is doth nevertheless work its effect. It is, that although Reason in general be convinc'd, that men form of us many Judgments not very favourable, and that the Examples of those we hear ever and anon made of others, and those which we make of them our
selves

selves might instruct us, do nevertheless in some sort cause us not to see those which are disadvantageous to us, and to apply our selves chiefly to those which are advantageous to us. So in Banishing from our minds all these Objects which may be able to displease us, in fixing our selves only to those which are pleasing to us, in deceiving our selves willingly, and in avoiding being deceived, our vanity remains half satisfied, and procures this fond Pleasure in which vain men place their false felicity.

14. It is yet more easy that the great ones, and generally all those whom it is our intent to please, do entertain themselves in this Illusion, because instead of making for our selves only one Portraiture of other men, we may in some sort make two, the one interior which is true, the other exterior wherein we paint nothing but what we judge may please them; and great care is taken afterwards to set before their eyes only this false Picture, and to endeavour to make them take that for the true one. Without doubt they would easily hinder themselves from being deceived therein, and might convince themselves if they would, that there is nothing so
false

false and so vain as all these Testimonies of Esteem and Affection which men shew them. They know often what they think themselves of those to whom they return the like, and they have no reason to judge others more sincere than themselves. But they are easily held back in this point, and do not dive so deep into these things. They content themselves therefore with this deceitful Surface, they leave there these interior portraitures which they fear to discover, and they make a stop only at these flattering Pictures, which are made purposely to draw from them what we pretend thereby.

15. We make use of the same preparation to hinder that the faults and miseries of others, and the Judgment which we see made of them, and which we our selves make of them, do not call us to our selves nor discover to us our own juglings. Wit assisted by self-love doth cut off all the reflections it can make, or applies it self so little thereunto that they make scarcely any Impression at all. We hear every hour people who deceive themselves, spoken of with scorn. We see that they are the common objects of mens disdain, because

because there is nothing more ridiculous then a man deceived, and deceived by his own vanity. Nevertheless we do not think that we are those ridiculous and deceived men; let men say of us in our absence what is said of others before us, let us give therein as much Subject as they, and let there be no appearance that they have more respect for us then for all the rest.

How frequent and how certain soever these objects may be, they have not more force to oblige the mind to enter into it self, and there to see the same faults and the same miseries then it sees in others. Think we more on death for hearing or for seeing the death of those with whom we have lived? We fly his Spectacle if we can; if we cannot fly it, yet we endeavour to fly the reflections it ought to produce. If we cannot stifle them absolutely, we turn away from them with what expedition possible. What I have said of Death may be said of all the other Miseries and of all Human Frailties, which may be able to represent ours to us. These Images strike us at every moment, but we endeavour as often to resist, and not to be daunted. We deceive our
selves

selves if we can, and if we cannot do it absolutely, at least we strive to turn our thoughts another way.

16. What should we say of a man who seeing his Picture every day in a Looking glass, and seeing it therein continually should not know it, and would never say *Behold I am here*? Should we not accuse him of stupidity little different from folly? This nevertheless is what all men do; and it is likewise the only secret they have found to make themselves happy. They see every moment the Image of their own selves, I mean of their own proper faults, in those of others, and yet they will not acknowledge them. To be full of Miseries and not to see them, to be ignorant of our faults when nobody else is, to be the Subject of most peoples laughter and not willing to know any thing of it; to feed our selves with vain Imaginations being unwilling to know that they are vain, is a condition which doth not seem very desirable; and yet it is this which is the delight of worldly men, and chiefly of the great ones.

17. 'Tis by these means we are interrupted from seeing the Truth, when we should use some care and application

tion to find it. But there are some encounters wherein Truth shews it self to us, and in which we should be forced to see it, if we did not use Cunning to avoid it. For some times we find men Charitable enough to try to free us from the delusions wherein we live in respect of our selves. Self-love therefore endeavours to banish this inconvenience, wants not yet the way to prosper therein. For it expresses so much Melancholy and evil humour to those who would do us this good Office; it finds so many pretences not to believe what is discovered to us of our faults; it is so ingenious to find out some greater in those who observe ours, and to make the judgments which are made to our disadvantage pass for wicked, that there is hardly any body will hazard to tell them us.

The general Principle that self-love inspires us with is, That we condemn nothing in us by a motive of Equity and Justice. So when any one shews that he does not approve of us in every thing, we attribute to him the *Idea* of prevention, of jealousy, or some other less favourable. And as no body loves to be looked so upon, there is formed
mong

amongst men a kind of Conspiracy to dissemble the opinions which they have one of another, and there is no agreement which is better preserved than that, because it is grounded upon the sentiment of self-love, from which few or none are exempt.

18. We must not think that men do not take care to hide the Truth only in respect of those whom they fear, or from whom they hope something. They do the same almost in respect of all the World.

Men apply themselves more to deceive great men, but they do not apply themselves to undeceive those of meaner quality. This is all the difference that's made between the one and the other. They love not to be hated by any body, so they do not love to tell truth to any one. They know on the contrary that to make it be received there should be many niceties, moderations, and many studied inventions. Now men will not take this pains for people they do not value. So we do not tell the Truth to Persons of Quality, because it is not our interest to do it. Nor to those of meaner degree because we have not Interest enough to tell it them.

19. This reserve that men keep amongst themselves in avoiding the Communicating the thoughts they have to the disadvantage of one another, is not nevertheless without Limits. And there is reason sometimes which persuades them to dispencc therewith. There needs also often but a little provocation to noisc abroad on a suddain what we had kept secret for a long time. And moreover we have not been reserved in this manner, but in speaking to the persons themselves, whose faults were known to us. But that which we dissembled in their presence, we speak ordinarily more freely in their absence, as we have had then more trouble to refrain. It is true we govern our selves alittle more reservedly in respect of those who can hurt us, and we use more precaution to discover what men think of them. But as it is an unsufferable Constraint to hide always these our sentiments, the desire which we have to free our selves from them makes us easily put on Confidence enough to trust those to whom we speak, and that there wants little or no reasons to incline us to declare our selves with freedom.

Now although these wicked Prodigalities

galities, which happen so often in the discourses men make, are in themselves a very great evil, seeing that whereas Charity doth oblige to tell Persons themselves of their faults, to give them thereby means to Correct them, and to hide them from others, to favour them we do ordinarily quite contrary, and speak of these faults to all the world, except to those to whom it should be necessary to speak of them. There might happen nevertheless from thence some good, if we had a care to profit thereby. Because, these particular discourses spreading themselves by little and little, and forming a publick Clamour, there returns often thereby something to the ears of them it concerns, because there are many found, who, having not Charity or Force enough to tell themselves what they think, are glad to be discharged thereof by attributing it to others. It would be then a means for those to whom it is discovered to draw them out of that Delusion wherein they live. But we have such deceitful hearts; and so full of aversion from any thing of Truth, that we abuse very often this means, and render it useless to our selves. For instead of judging of these discourses

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ses, and these opinions by which we are detracted as we ought they are spread abroad amongst an infinite number of persons, and so we have not right to complain thereof to any particular body, the inclination we have to deceive ourselves causeth us to turn all our malice against him who is charged therewith; We persuade our selves that he is single in his opinion; that he hath not entered thereupon, but through hate or interest, and that there is no man of sense and reason who does not condemn it. We attribute to him likewise some Imprudence, or some excess for pretending more right to reject those advices; and by the means of this voluntary delusion we stifle the impression which these discourses might imprint in us, we conserve our selves in the esteem we have of our selves, and we avoid in some sort seeing what the world disapproves, because it is an object or spectacle which vanity is not able to suffer.

20. I have said that we shun it in some sort, because we do not shun it absolutely. Truth always makes it self a little light through all those Clouds wherewith men strive to obscure it: there pass always some rayes which incom-

mode Pride, and which trouble this false quiet which it endeavors to procure it self. These opinions, which are grounded only upon a voluntary error, are never firm and sure. They are always mixed with Mistrust, and consequently with melancholy, trouble, and molestation. So instead of this pure Joy, and this full and entire satisfaction which self-love aimeth at, all it can do with all its wiles is to suspend for some time the sentiments of sadness, which are nourished at the bottom of the heart, and which are always ready to seize thereon.

21. These are the natural sentiments of Self-love, and the addressees it makes use of to conceal our faults, and to hinder people from telling us of them. And it is remarkable that as it is in it self a very great fault not to see the truth, so Self-love does not allow it no more than others. Self-love does not use less artifice to disguise it to others then to our selves. And therefore we see few or none who do not esteem it an honour to love truth, and who do grant sincerely that they are not at quiet until it be discovered to them. We are offended with this reproach as much as
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with any other, and in a word, we would have the glory to love Truth, and the satisfaction never to hear it.

But as these two Passions in some sort do not hold together, we endeavor to accord them in giving something to the one and to the other. It is true, that as it is Self-love which causeth this difference, so it makes it very unequal. For it brings it about that we are never told of those essential faults, to which we are inclined by a quick and active Passion; that we dissemble to those which get us ill will from men, and which would give occasion to despise our selves, and to believe that 'tis with reason that others do slight us. All the liberty therefore that we give to others upon this subject, is to mind us of some small faults, which do not disfigure the Image we have of our selves, and which suffers the whole beauty thereof to remain. *Velut si egregio Impressos reprehendas Corpore navos.*

So we suffer men to declare their opinions of a Discourse, or of a Writing, which we have made to find fault therein with some expressions not very Just, some bad Cadence, some place neglected; conditionally nevertheless that they esteem the design of it; the

Judgment, the Oeconomy, and the other more essential parts. We pardon likewise those who advertise us of some want of respect, of management and other trifles of this nature, provided they do not touch upon our principal Passions, and that all they observe in us may subsist with the esteem and approbation of the generality. 'Tis on these Conditions, and at this rate we resolve with our selves sometimes to purchase glory, love truth, and give it some entrance; yet it must be Self-love which opens it to it, and that it be accompanied with testimonies of esteem and affection not to be slighted.

22. In the second Part we shall speak more particularly of the ways men use to hinder that truth trouble them not, in the esteem and love of themselves. But what we have already said may suffice to shew that we extend too much those common Maxims, that men naturally love truth, that they have a natural aversion for what is false, and that there being an infinite of persons who would deceive others, there are none at all who would be deceived; seeing that it appears on the contrary, that the world is almost composed of nothing but

but wilful blind people, who hate and fly the light, and who labour for nothing more than to deceive themselves, and to entertain themselves in delusion. Where is then this love of Truth, wherewith we flatter our selves, and what hatred for falsity may be found in men who according to Scripture seek nothing else?

23. Nevertheless, we may say that these Maxims have place in things Indifferent, in which men taking no Interests at all, do not in effect love to be deceived, and prefer truth before falsity. The which shews some natural love for Truth. But it is seldom seen that this natural Inclination is free to act, and that the mind is not prepossessed with some Passion which makes it incline more to one side than to another. There needs scarcely any thing to make Self-love to deliberate. It makes private and secret Interests even things wherein it seems to have none at all. The least advance, the least engagements, the least inclination to please or to displease suffice to take away the ballance, and to incline the minds, to seek out reasons only on one side: How many are there, for example, who have no reason to continue in an

opinion; but because there would be some trouble to examin. the Contrary reasons. They fly the pains of instructing themselves, because it is laborious: They will judge, and decide, because they will appear Learned, and to satisfie at once these two inclinations they suppose without other examination that what they have formerly learn'd is true.
Tadio novæ Cura semel placita pro æternis servant.

24. The chief and principal use we make of this love of truth, is, to persuade us that what we love is true. For if we would do our selves Justice, we should acknowledge that we love not things because they are true, but that we believe them true, because we love them. Our minds are fixed to objects Independent of their truth, and by the sole relation of these Inclinations. But because they cannot enjoy them, if they look upon them as false, they endeavor in some sort to add thereto the Idea of truth, that they may be fixed thereunto more firmly. *Quicunque aliud*

Aug. Con.
 l. 10. 13.

amant; hoc quod amant volunt esse veritalem.

25. We love truth in general as the common

common and general good. For as we can love nothing which we do not think good, likewise we can love nothing which we believe not to be true. But Self-love knows very well how to conjoin these general Inclinations with particular Passions; And as it makes us believe that what we love is good, it makes us likewise believe that what we love is true; that is to say, we cannot love what is false under its proper and natural form, and loving in effect many false and deceitful objects, it finds means to represent them under the image of truth.

26. This aversion so uniform and constant which is found amongst men, for the truth which discovers them to themselves, and this inclination so general of shunning the sight of their faults, as their greatest misfortune gives way to believe that this common Maxim which calls them back to themselves, and makes them to know themselves, *Nosce teipsum*, proceeds not from a common light persuading them that this knowledge is for their good, and which makes them desire it, but that it may well have its source in the knowledge of every mans heart, who feeling himself incom-

modated with the vanity, and the Injustice which he observes in others, persuades him to seek and desire for them, this knowledge which he neither seeks nor desires for himself.

27. This thought is so much more likely as nothing shocks us more in the faults we observe in others, then the blindness wherein we see they are in regard of themselves. What is there more troublesome than a vain man who is taken up with nothing but himself, and who would have men only to apply themselves to him, who admires himself continually, and who imagines that others do the same, or that they are to blame if they do not? And who is he who hath not a great inclination to tell persons of this opinion, that they would do well to labor to know themselves to draw themselves out of those delusions wherein they are? *Nosce teipsum.*

28. The World is full of people, who observe other mens faults with an admirable Judgment, who pardon them nothing, and who being subject to the same, or to greater faults themselves, do not make the least reflection thereon. The vainest persons most frequently laugh at other mens vanity. Those
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who are Cheated, most laugh at those whom they believe deceived. The most unjust reproach others of their Injustice: The sharpest men give sweet lessons; The most prejudiced persons speak earnestly against prejudice: The most opiniated are the first in accusing others of obstinacy. It is very hard, not to have a desire to advise these sort of people that they speak to themselves in speaking against others, and not to tell them at least in their heart: *Nosce teipsum.*

29. When we see these ambitious men who heap enterprizes upon enterprizes, who form designs to which many lives would not satisfy, who trouble by their caprichios both their own and other mens quiet, who never dream of death which threatens them every moment, who imagine that others live, only for them, who devour with an insatiable Covetousness, other mens Goods. Who is it that does not find himself inclined to recal them to the knowledge of their mortal Conditions, and to make them mindful that they are but men?

We feel the same motions in an infinite other rencounters, as when we see people, who for want of knowing themselves,

selves, undertake things infinitely above them, and in which they cannot prosper : who will do all because they judge and think themselves capable of all, and who spoil all by their want of parts ; who glory in taking Counsel of no body ; who complain to others of their bad success that they have had by their imprudence. In fine, as the ignorance of oneself is found almost in all vices, and is most what shocks us therein, we should every moment endeavor to draw people out of their delusion in teaching them to know themselves, if this motive were not withheld by others more powerful.

30. We have right methinks to conclude from what I said but now, that this Precept, *Know thou thy self* : in the mouth of those who have acted only by self-love was rather the effect of impatience, and vexation, stirred up by the faults that they see in others, then by a clear sight of the necessity of this knowledge for every man in particular, and for his proper good. We would have others to know themselves, to the end they might act in a less shocking manner in regard of us : And yet we will not know our selves because we will not see

see in our selves what thwarts us therein, nor think our selves obliged to labor to correct some faults, in which we are very glad to continue. We find means to foster our selves in our proper delusion, in fixing our thoughts only on certain objects, and hiding others from our selves. But we find the delusion of others very ridiculous, because we see in them what they will not see therein, and clearly perceive the Judgments that are made of them, of which they see but a part. We do not forbear nevertheless to envy something the condition of those persons so deceived, and to covet their place. But it is by fancying that if we were there we could avoid the faults we see in them, and that we could procure to our selves all that they wanted. And I know not if we would have it on condition to live in the same delusion wherein we believe they do. For men have light enough not to believe others happy by the possession of false wealth; and they are not capable to place their happiness therein, but by banishing away the thought that it is false, and taking it for real.

2^d. It is true, our understanding is not so blind but that having recall'd
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others by vexation to the knowledge of themselves, it must conclude from thence in general, that it would be useful that every one should know himself, and apply to himself this Precept in giving it to others. We are also very glad to honour our selves in making a shew to be comprehended in the Precepts which we give to others. But these cold and speculative applications are very far from forming an effective desire to labour to acquire this knowledge, and lastly human reasons, which might carry or incline us thereunto, are hardly able to make us surmount the natural disaffection we have thereunto. Whosoever looks upon himself only in relation to this present life, is always unfortunate, be it that he do know or not know himself. He is more really so in not knowing himself, but he is more sensibly so in knowing himself; and the sensible carries him ordinarily to the real, because it makes Impression upon the senses, whereas the insensible realities act only upon the reason. Now reason when it withstands the inclinations of Se'f-love is not of very great use in the Conduct of life; and after all, Death which puts an end to all Imprudence, and all the wisdom

of men renders the advantage of the one above the other so inconsiderable, that it takes away the desire of seeking eagerly: Which made *Solomon* say to expresse this human opinion, *That he hath said in himself: If I must die, what will it profit me to have applyed my self to wisdom?* Every advantage which regards only this present life is hardly worth the pains we undergo to obtain it, because this life is only an instant which deserves not to be deliberated on.

32. We shall not find then in our own nature any inclination which doth move it to apply its self to the knowledge of its self, nor sufficient motives which can make it desire: But if we add thereto the lights of faith, the necessity of this duty will appear so pressing, that we shall have much ado to comprehend that there are any Christians, who would live well in the ignorance of themselves, and their estate. For this faith teaches us, that it is in vain that we fly and avoid knowing our selves, that this sight is unavoidable; seeing that God will open the eyes of all men that they may see themselves such as they are, but with this horrible difference, That those who have been unwilling to know themselves

selves in this World, shall see whether they will or no themselves everlastingly with a sight which shall fill them with rage and despair; Whereas those who have not avoided seeing themselves in this life, and who have laboured by this means to destroy in themselves what is displeasing to God, shall hereafter see nothing which may not be joyful to them, or rather they shall forget themselves happily for eternity, because they will see nothing but God in themselves and in all other Creatures. We have therefore only to chuse either to endeavor to know our selves in this World, or to be for ever our own proper torment. By making tryal of this terrible Threat God pronounces against the wicked, *Arguam te & statuum contra faciem tuam*, I will reprehend thee, and will place thee before thy own face.

33. What despair will that be of a miserable Soul, who, having avoided all her life seeing and knowing her self, shall be at once fixed and glued to this object for all Eternity, without hope of ever being able to divert her self for one single moment, who shall have continually before her eyes all her Crimes, not being able to destroy them, nor to avoid
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seeing them. This is the Inevitable punishment of this voluntary forgetfulness of ones self. We must labour sincerely either to know our selves during this life, or to know our selves eternally in the other in this horrible manner. There is no Mean, neither Reason nor Faith have doubtless any trouble to deliberate. But as we are carried to this forgetfulness by a very violent weight, and which doth overpoise almost all the World, it is necessary to fortifie our Faith, and to maintain our Reason by all the considerations which may discover to us the advantages of this Knowledge, as are these which shall be mentioned hereafter.

34. We may say that as the not-knowing of ones self is the source or fountain of all vices, the knowledge thereof is the ground or foundation of virtues. And we need only consider the nature of each Virtue to be persuaded thereof. What means, for example, to be truly humble without knowing ones self? or rather, what is humility but a knowledge of ones sins, of ones miseries, and of ones unworthiness, which makes one subject in his own thoughts, and judge himself worthy of all sorts of Abasements?

ments? This is the definition which St. Barnard gives thereof. *Humilitas virtus est, quâ bona verissimâ sui Cognitione sibi Ipse vilescit.* The sight of our faults is therefore the foundation of humility, and 'tis at the same time that which preserves it. 'Tis presently lost if we only observe our virtues whether they be true or false. Strange condition of mans Soul to whom sickness it self is necessary, that she may not die! She is almost void of all good, and cannot see the little that remains without danger of losing it.

25. The knowledge of our selves doth not humble us simply in respect of God. It hinders us also that we do not raise our selves above our neighbor, there being nothing but the forgetfulness of our selves which is able to make us contempt and despise him. One sick person never insults over another, but in forgetting his own sickness, and as one is always full of sweetness towards ones self, he never useth others hardly but in distinguishing himself from them. And this is it which the knowledge of our selves doth not permit us to do, seeing that it always discovers to us either the same faults in us, or the roots thereof, and makes

makes us feel the weight which we should undergo if Gods grace did not permit it. Therefore the Apostle in recommending us to reprove with sweetness those who sin in *spiritu levitatis*, recalls us to the knowledge of our weakness, and the danger wherein we are of falling every moment: *Ne & tu tentaris*. Behold the source of meekness, and of humility towards ones neighbor.

36. Man is so weak and so vain, that he is equally carryed to pride by the sight of Virtue, which he thinks he hath, and by that of faults which he observes in others. By the one he raiseth himself in his own opinion above them. By the other he humbleth them and bringeth them under him. But the knowledge of ones self preserves both the one and the other, and in placing ones proper faults before ones eyes, it stifles on one part the complacency that it may have in his virtue, and it renders the other more Indulgent to anothers faults. So it keeps him at least at a level with other men: It teacheth him to bear them as he would be born with by them, and it makes also in some manner a good use of Self-love.

37. The forgetfulness of ones self pro-

produceth obdurateness, and by a contrary effect the knowledge of ones self produceth Piety. For there is in the sentiments of Compassion for others some secret reflections upon our selves, by which we look upon our selves either as having suffered the same evils, or as being liable to suffer them.

Non Ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

And it is this which makes men who believe they are above others, and who imagine the evils wherewith others are afflicted, cannot happen to them, are for the most part hard hearted, because they make not upon themselves these kind of reflections, which soften the heart in consideration of anothers evil.

It is the same with the most part of Injustices we do to others. They come ordinarily from a blindness, which makes us never blame our selves, but think that we are exempt from all faults and misdemeanors; we lay the blame all upon others. So that nothing contributes so much to make us just and equitable towards others as the knowledge of our selves. 'Tis that makes us discover in the bottom of our hearts the impression of

of the Law of nature which forbids us to do to others, what we would not they should do to us. 'Tis that which disperses all the Clouds wherewith Self-love doth observe this rule in the rencounters wherein it is concerned. 'Tis this which hinders us likewise from complaining with eagerness of the disadvantageous Judgments men form of us, and of the injustices men may do us, in convincing us that oftentimes we deal so with others without taking care thereof. In fine, 'tis this which suppresseth mens insolence, and haughtiness, and placing a very lively Image of their miseries before their eyes, destroys the most ordinary cause of injustices which they do to others.

38. The sight of our faults in suppressing our pride, suppresseth also the consequences of it, and all the Passions wherewith it mingles it self, and as there are few whereof it is not the source, there also few whereof this sight is not the remedy. A man who knows himself well, is scarcely emulous, because he is convinced that he deserves nothing, and therefore he does not believe that the honor which is given to others is due to him.

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He is neither sharp nor vindictive, because the small esteem that he hath of himself, doth not make him take or reckon the offences men do to him as things of moment.

He cannot hate any man, because he cannot hate himself, and sees nevertheless nothing in others that he does not acknowledge in himself in some degree.

He is not very ambitious, and he cannot form designs to raise himself in the World, because these designs spring from a belief we have that we deserve the rank whereto we aspire, and do think that we have more cunning and industry than others to arrive thereunto. Now a man who knows himself well, will not flatter himself with these thoughts.

He does not conceive moreover this elevation as a great good. He perceives that these passions may render him very miserable in some condition. That his Covetousness would exceed its limits more, if it had more means to satisfy itself, and in the uncertainty wherein he is, whether it would be good or bad for him, he easily concludes to keep himself in the places wherein he finds himself.

39. That Poverty which *Iesus Christ* hath made the first of the Beatitudes, and which is praised in so many places in Scripture, is nothing else but an humble knowledge of ones self. For to be poor in this manner, one must know that he is so, and able to say, with the Prophet, *Ego vix videntem paupertatem tuam.* That is to say, that we ought to know in us either the lack of goods which we have not, or the lack of all right to the goods which we hold from Gods liberality, which includes an entire knowledge of our selves.

40. It is easie to comprehend how this knowledge doth make us more patient in respect of the evils which are purely opinion; as unfavourable judgments which are made of us, calumnies, and fallities. For it is clear, that knowledge ought to lessen the sense thereof by the sight it gives us of our effective misery, which yet is much more great then all that man can say of it. But we do not see at first how this knowledge of our miseries and faults may serve us to be more patient in outward evils, in losses, in disgraces, in sickness, in griefs. We might also believe that it would be a new Charge which would

only be proper to overwhelm the Soul by sadness and despair. Yet it is not so, for if this sight of our faults be a burthen, 'tis a burthen which comforts one in all other afflictions; because it discovers to us that they are Just, that they are proportioned to our Inward evils, and that they may serve as a remedy thereunto; that it convinces us that prosperity would not have been less dangerous then adversity, and that giving us leave to reflect upon all that is arrived to us in our life of good and evil, it makes us see that we have yet more abused our selves with good then evil, and that we are charged more strictly therewith in the sight of God.

41. It is yet easier to comprehend how much the knowledge of ones self doth contribute to Prudence. For the most part of enterprises ill managed, and designs rashly undertaken spring from the presumption of those who form them; and this presumption comes from a blindness wherein they are in respect of themselves. There is nothing more frequent then these indiscretions in particular actions, and they all spring for the most part from the principal action of life which is the choice of
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the State and Employment wherein every one ought to pass his time. For it is this wherein the ignorance of our selves makes us to commit the greatest faults.

There is no man so disgraced by Nature who cannot find in the order of the world a place proportioned to the strength of his mind and body, but the small knowledge which he hath of himself is the cause that most people make a bad choice. Let us make reflection on those who take upon them the Charges and Employments of this World, and the places that they enjoy, and we shall scarcely find any one well placed. How many are there who having Arms and no Head do chuse Employments which have need of a head and not of Arms? How many are there who being born to obey and not to govern do possess Places where there is need of Commanding and not of obeying? How many that ingage themselves in Offices which are above their Sphear, their Power, and above their Virtue? and how few withdraw themselves from them by the knowledge of their Incapacities? Every one thinks he is able, and only limits his pretentions by the debility wherein

48. *Of the Knowledge*

wherein he finds himself of being raised to a higher pitch. This is the most common Source of worldly disorders, and of the Evils that befall both Church and State, and likewise of each particular. For 'tis not possible that a person ill placed, and who wants necessary qualities to acquit himself of the Employment wherein he is engaged, should not commit a world of faults, and these faults which are the sequels of his temerity and presumption do render him ridiculous in this World, and everlastingly miserable in the other.

42. The sole knowledge of ones self may supply the defect of Talents, and the sole defect of this knowledge on the contrary renders all these Talents useless, dangerous, and pernicious to him who hath them. 'Tis no great harm to have neither Memory, Understanding, Conduct, Science, Industry, nor Ability, provided that one know it; Let him borrow of some other what he hath not, and undertake nothing which requires those qualities which God hath not pleased to bestow upon him. A man with all these Imperfections, in applying himself only to that which is proportion-
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ed to his ability, is Praise-worthy, seeing that he may become a Saint, and that he is often more acceptable to God than those who have all the qualities which he wants. He is only deprived of them for a Moment, that is, for this present life, and he hath as much right as any man to hope he may be partaker of them in the other. But let us suppose all these Talents in one man, and as much light and understanding as we will, if with these he does not know himself in his imperfections, and in his weaknesses, all these qualities will prove only his fall and ruin, and often also in this world. If he cannot measure his enterprises by his forces, he will enter into rash engagements and presumption which hath no boundaries, not being check'd by the Rains of the knowledge of ones self, will carry him away to dangerous excesses.

43. One may add to these particular reasons this general one which ought to make more Impression upon our minds and add thereto more horror of this blindness, That as the common punishment of the Condemned in the other life will be to see themselves, *Arguamur, & Patiamur contra faciem suam*, the
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general Character of the Condemned in this here is not to see themselves; so that it is equally true that we enter not into heaven unless we know our selves, and into hell because we do not know our selves.

The death of sin which is the cause of eternal death is accompanied always with a kind of misfortunate drowsiness which deprives us of the knowledge of our condition, and therefore the Prophet earnestly beseeched God, *That he would enlighten his eyes so the end that he might not sleep in Death*, because he knew very well that this death was inseparable from that drowsiness, and that provided he did not sleep he should not dye. *Illumina oculos meos, ne unquam obdormiam in morte.* The State that sin reduceth man to is so horrible that he would not suffer it, if he saw it but, and so men whom Pleasure draws thereunto find means to hide it from themselves by a thousand Inventions which they are miserably ingenious to find out.

44. One of the most criminal ones, and yet the commonest, is to stifle in oneself the sight which condemns these disorders, in justifying them to their faces by

by false Rules which authoriseth them. 'Tis the Origin of so many Errors in Morality, and of so many bad Maxims which men have always endeavoured to introduce into the Church, and principally in these latter times. For men not being willing to render their actions conform to the Law of God, have endeavoured to render the Laws of God conform to their actions. In stead of redressing their corrupt Inclinations according to the exactness of this Divine rule, they have endeavoured to strain this rule, even to adjust it to their inclinations. They will not only follow their own Interests and Passions, but they will also be approved in their Interests and Passions, nor will they permit that their Consciences reproach them of being unjust. So that things not Answering their expectation in the Maxims which God hath given us for our guide, if they did leave them in their Purity, they have endeavoured to alter them, to find therein this approbation which they seek, and to appease by this means the trouble of their Conscience. 'Tis thus that by the favour of these false lights, which they willingly take for true ones, they settle themselves in this

unfortunate Peace and Quiet, which is properly the sleepiness which the Prophet beseeched God to be preserved from by the Rays of the true light.

45. What if they cannot succeed to hide entirely this light which condemns them, they have recourse to other means to weaken the effect of it, and to hinder the Impression which it would be able to make upon them. Sometimes in letting the Law subsist, they are contented not to think of it, never comparing their actions therewith, nor ever looking on them unless with contrary faces, which do not represent to them what they have defective. If they cannot stop the sight of this opposition entirely which they have to the Laws of God, they weaken and diminish the Idea of it in joyning themselves to an infinite of people which they condemn as well as themselves, as if this croud of Criminals was capable to defend them against God. Lastly, if they do not disguise the Laws of God, they disguise themselves to themselves. They attribute to themselves motives and intentions which they have not, and will not see those they have. Thus in having a false judgment of their actions, they

they justify themselves during their whole life by the means of this voluntary delusion. Behold the sleepiness we must desire to be preserved from, and what every honest well-meaning man ought to resist all his life by endeavouring to know himself, and by embracing all means which may help him therein, and which we are going to shew in this second Part,

OF

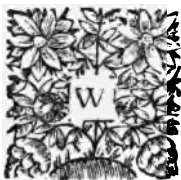
OF



Of the Knowledge of Ones self.

Second Part.

Containing Means to Acquire it.



WE have endeavoured in the first Part of this Treatise, only to make the Knowledge of ones self desired. We suppose in this here that desire quite formed and joined to a sincere resolution of labouring to acquire this knowledge. There is nothing more to be done but to put those who are so well disposed, into the way that leads to it, and to open to them the most proper means to attain thereunto; And we may first tell them that this desire is one of the

the Principallest of them, and that it would suffice to produce this effect if it were full and entire. For there is this difference betwixt this knowledge and that of objects which are out of us, we may be ignorant of other things, how desirous soever we may be to know them, but we continue not in the ignorance of our selves, but only because we do not desire absolutely to forsake it, and we nourish in the bottom of our hearts a secret disowning of truth. It is this which in us opposes the light of God, and hinders it from penetrating our understandings. Without that it would make us see clearly into all the foulds of our hearts; it would advertise us of all our dangers, and we should have need of no other thing to make us know our selves perfectly, but to expose our selves to these Divine beams.

2. We have shewn in the first Part that this miserable Inclination was become natural to man since sin, and we must add here, that grace never destroys it absolutely, and that whatsoever desire it inspires us with not to blind our selves, there rests always as we may say in the bottom of the old man an inclination towards this voluntary blind-

ness, which is observed by these words

*Omnia qui
male agit. edit
lucem. non ve-
nit. ad lucem
ut non mani-
festentur ope-
ra ejus.*

*of Jesus Christ, That every
man who does ill, hates
the light, and comes not to
the light, that his works
may not be known. For
as there is no man who
doth not incline to evil,*

consequently there is none who hath not
some aversion for the light which dis-
covers it to him.

But also as that inclination to evil,
which sin hath imprinted in our Souls,
doth not hinder God from Imprinting
therein, by his grace, a contrary Inclination,
which inclines us to Good and
to Justice, This natural disowning which
we have of Truth hinders not God from
breathing into us a contrary Inclination,
which makes us love and search Truth.
We are only obliged to acknowledge
that our heart is divided, That we love
not absolutely truth, that there are two
opposite weights and inclinations in us,
so that if we have reason to give thanks
to God because he hath given us some
love for Truth; we have also reason to
humble our selves in beholding our selves,
according to this other inclination, as
Enemies to this same Truth.

There

3. There is nothing that makes us better to comprehend the greatness of mans disorder then the sight of this miserable Propensity we feel in our selves. For God being the Truth, the Light, the Justice; to hate the Light, the Truth, the Justice, is to hate God himself. Nevertheless man hates them. He would gladly that this Truth were not, that this Light were extinguished, and that this Justice were abolisht; that is to say he would that there were no God. He wisheth that there were an annihilation of it, and not being able to destroy it in his proper being, he destroys it as much as he can for himself by shutting his eyes against the sight of Truth.

Behold that condition in which we are not only born, but wherein yet we are partly engaged, and from whence we ought to endeavour to free our selves by lessening as much as we shall be able this natural averfness we have for Truth, and by labouring to encrease in us what God hath given us of love for it. It is good to exercise our selves more about this work to convince our selves of the weakness of this love. We may easily do it in considering how much a perfect and sincere love, of

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which the heart is possessed, as is that of an Usurer for his money, is different from the love we have, or that we flatter our selves to have for the Truth.

4. An Usurer inclines continually towards gain; the means that are given him thereof enter always without resistance, they are alway received with a sincere Joy, and without opposition. There needs no studied management nor moderation to make them agreeable. Every man is welcome to propose them Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, Strangers; Inferiours, Equals, Superiours; and he is far from conceiving any bitterness against those who make him any Overture to encrease his Wealth, it would be a certain means to sweeten him if he were angry at them. He does not amuse himself in finding out reasons to reject these advices, nor ever takes occasion to examin the defects of those who give them. He is not scrupulous in manners, in the behaviour, in the intentions. He only seeks to assure himself of the truth of what hath been told him, and examining it sincerely, he fears nothing but being deceived therein.

Behold

Behold in what manner we ought to love Truth, and the Model the Wise Man proposeth to us, in ordering us to seek it as Money; and we may see there that we love it so little and seek it so imperfectly, that the contrary to what we have said of this Usurer may be said of us.

For our hearts are hardly ever open on that side Truth presents it self. It finds there always resistance, and never enters but by violence and force; and if sometimes it be in appearance gratefully received, it is always with some inward remorse of some superficial joy, with which we distinguish it. No man is proper to make us know it, and self-love is almost never wanting to furnish us with Reproaches against those who undertake it. Rhetorick hath neither Cunning nor delicateness enough to insinuate it without hurting us. We always find excess in the things, defects in the Grace, in the manner, and in the time; and in stead of applying our mind sincerely to the examination of what is proposed to us, we apply it only in an unprofitable search of their defects who have given these Counsels. This is the portraiture of the Spirit, and the Conduct

duct of the most part of men. The lineaments are more observed in some than in others, but there are very few in whom some foot-steps of them do not appear.

5. At least let us not flatter ourselves with a Virtue which we have not, and let us beware of saying, as many do, *That we desire nothing so much as to know our selves, and that they can do us no greater pleasure then to help us therein.* Let us on the contrary acknowledge that it would be to give to our selves a Praise which surpasseth man, and which could be nothing but the effect of our Vanity and our Blindness: So that the first step we shall make to get out of it is to acknowledge sincerely the opposition we feel in our selves against this self knowledge, and to weep for it before God as being one of our greatest misfortunes.

6. The second step which is no less essential is to acknowledge the impossibility we have of prospering in this search, without the assistance of Gods light. Because there is only this light which is able to dissipate the Clouds which cover our hearts, and it is only by means of it that we are capacitated to.

to judg truly of what we discover therein, our motions being good or bad as they are for or against Truth, which is the rule of them. Lastly, there is none but God who can give us a knowledge of our selves, which is moderate to the just proportion our Infirmitie requires, that which we are able to procure purely by human force, being sometimes as dangerous as the ignorance it self of our State and Condition, because it is able to discourage the Soul, and bring her to a kind of Dispair, whereas that which God gives her, upholds her at the same time that the other dejects her, and never shrinks back at the sight of her miseries, but is raised again by hope in the mercy of God.

7. But this persuasion, That we ought not to expect this knowledge so necessary except from the pure Grace of God, doth in no manner exclude the reflections we must make to obtain it. For Grace is often hid under these reflections, and makes use thereof to make these lights enter into our minds. Therefore we must act in respect of this important Point of Christian life as in all others. That is to say, we must demand it of God as dependant on him only, and

and labour to get it as if it did depend only on our care: And it is in this consideration that we shall give here some Overtures which may be useful in this Enquiry.

8. There are two sorts of knowledge of man, the one general, the other particular. The first discovers what happens to all men in the state of sin wherein they are born; the other teacheth us what we have added to this common Corruption. Because though it may be the same in all at the Root, it takes nevertheless infinite several Shapes, accordingly as the Soul forsakes them more or less, and that Concupiscence being limited and excited by occasions and objects, diffuseth it self more on the one side then the other, so that by this different mixture of particular disorders, it forms it self as many several Diseases and Conditions, as there are different Souls.

It is, without doubt, to this particular knowledge of our condition that we ought to incline. For it would help little or nothing to contemplate the general Portraiture of the corruption of Nature, if we make not use of it to trace out our own, seeing that it may
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be a means to cure us particularly, and not men generally. But the knowledge of the common condition of men is nevertheless very useful, and comprehends likewise the greatest part of this particular knowledge which we seek. For these defects and these Vices do not cease, for being common, to be the Vices and the Defects of each of us; they subsist not in the Air, nor in some being separated from us. They are in us, and render each of us as miserable as if none other had them.

9. We cannot propose a more proper Image to present the State of man corrupted by Sin then that which the Scripture useth to express that of *Jerusalem* by, in saying, That from the head to the foot there was not in it one sound part; *a planta pedis usque ad Verticem, non est in ea Sinitis*. Let us then imagine an universal Wound, or rather, a heap of Sores, Plagues, and Ulcers; wherewith mans Body is covered over in a horrid and frightful manner; Let there be amongst these Sores some that seem to be more venomous and enflamed; others that look as if were dead and without heat, but that have nevertheless this which is common, that they may
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all become Mortal, these same which seem almost Cured being able to enflame themselves afresh by divers inward and outward causes sufficient to produce this effect, this man having no means or force to hinder it. Behold the Image of the State wherein we are born, and what we are by Nature. The love of our selves which is the Center and Fountain of all our Maladies gives us a violent inclination for Pleasures, for Promotion, for all that doth nourish our Curiosity, to fill up thereby the terrible vacuity which the loss of our true happiness hath caused in our hearts. And this Inclination disposes us to procure these three objects of our desires, by all sorts of means, how unjust and how criminal soever they may be.

But as these objects are changed a thousand ways, acting more or less upon our imaginations and our senses, the motives by which the Soul is swayed thereto are also very different: And it is that which makes the variety of our passions. Therefore the divers assemblings and the several degrees make the difference of the particular humors and dispositions of men. Some are more Criminal, others more Innocent according

ding to their objects; some more lively, others more languishing, according as they behave themselves. There are some likewise which appear absolutely extinguished, because the heart is Lorded over by a contrary Passion. And these are the wounds without inflammation, and almost cured, whereof we were speaking even now. But we must not rely thereon absolutely; For they never are so well closed up but that they may be venom'd again. How far soever we may be from certain Vices, there remains always nevertheless in us inclination enough to make us fall therein, if God did permit that the thoughts which might dissuade us should be taken away from our mind, that the objects which might incline us thereunto should act lively upon us, and lastly that there should be a heap of outward Circumstances able to provoke our Concupiscence, and to turn it on that side, which hath occasioned St. *Augustine* to establish this fine Rule, *That of all the sins that men commit, there is not one that another man would not commit, if he were not assisted by Him who made Man. Nullum Peccatum facit homo, quod non facit alius homo, si non adjuvet Rector a quo factus est homo.*

10. Let us therefore never flatter ourselves with a clear exemption from any vices, and acknowledge in us this unfortunate aptness to all the Crimes and disorders of men. Let this consideration never permit us to raise our selves above any one whomsoever. Let it humble us by all the disorders and by all the defects which we shall observe in others, being that they are ours in some sort by an inclination we have thereunto, and by an impossibility we are in of securing our selves from them unless God preserve us. Thus the History of man which comprehends almost nothing but that of their Passions, their weakness, and their disorders, will in some sort become our own History; and whereas it is for the most part of people only a vain and idle recreation, it will be for us, if we will consider it in this sense, a very solid Instruction, which will continually set our faults before our eyes, and make us acknowledge either that which we are really, or what we may come to if God leave us to our selves.

11. It is by these reflections which we ought to make without intermission upon all we see, and learn by mens disorders, that we must endeavour to conceive

ceive more distinctly the corruption of our nature. For it does not Justifie to have only a confused and a general *Idea* of it, like those we have already drawn. We must consider particularly the several parts and the effects that depend thereon, and strive to know thoroughly the injustice, the vanity, and the weakness of the nature of man, the progress and the effects of his Passions, in applying our selves always to these common knowledges, and not contenting our selves to acknowledge simply that we have the Root and the Source of these defects, endeavour moreover to discover what these Roots have produced in us, and even to what degree they are living.

12. But as the disorder and Injustice of man are only deprivations of the order wherein he ought to be, and of the Justice in which he ought to remain firm, it is clear that it cannot be known as it ought to be, whilest we are ignorant of this Order and this Justice, that is to say, of the Divine and Eternal Laws which rule and govern mens Duties, and from whence they cannot be separated without falling into disorder and injustice. But it is not here in this place that

that we intend to treat of it throughly, it is rather the substance absolutely of Morality then of a small Writing like this here; and we will content our selves to propose in general some advices to avoid in the study we must make all our lives, the voluntary digressions, and the crafty and subtil fetches wherein the aversion for Truth doth ingage us unknown to our selves, or rather without acknowledging that we were aware of them.

13. Amongst the Rules which prescribe mens Duties, and concerning which they shall be judged, there are some generally known, as for Example, that Murder, Theft, Adultery, Fornication, False witnesses, are actions very Criminal; and others on the contrary concerning which there is some difference betwixt those who engage themselves in the deciding these kind of questions.

I do not by this difference pretend to take away the certainty and evidence of these contested Rules. For I know that there are some which are no less clear and certain then Principles the most generally received by all men, and of which Rules there is no doubt but by mistake of application or by blindness

ness of Passion and Malice. I will only mark the fact, and distinguish the truths of Morality in these two Classes, by relation not to their real evidence, but to the effective disposition of men, who have embraced the one unanimously, and who are divided in regard of the other.

I place likewise in the same rank with these contested Rules those, which although little oppugn'd by writings and discourse, are nevertheless by practice, and which many who would pass and be thought to lead a Christian-like life, do not forbear to violate by their carriages, not ceasing, for all that, to find out Confessors who do tolerate them, or who do approve them, and without losing the esteem of Persons who are very regular. There are, for example, very few Confessors who would authorise, by a formal decision, Balls, Comedies, Romances, the immodest manner Women dress themselves in now a days, the use that is made commonly of the Goods belonging to the Church, the seeking after Ecclesiastical Dignities. Nevertheless seeing that so many, who have some Conscience, make no scruple of all these things, there must needs
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be Confessors who find nothing to say against them, and who believe them not obliged to forsake them.

14. Whosoever desires to know himself ought to be Instructed and well Verfed in these two kind of Truths, seeing that it is thereby that he ought to judge of himself and his condition. And it is very easie to do it in the respect of the first; because there's no need but that we seriously wish it. These truths are expos'd to all those who desire to be informed of them; they are to be found every where. But if it is easie to learn them after a speculative manner, it is not so easie to make use of them as a light to discover the very bottom of the heart, and to judge of our actions. Because self-love, which cannot hinder them always from entring into the memory, acts so that they continue fruitless therein, that is to say, that they never serve for Rules to us, that we never compare our action with them, that we never draw the most natural and certain consequences from them, that they never come into our mind but when we are compelled to discourse of them; and lastly that we look upon them not different from those opinions of the
ancient

ancient Philosophers, which we are glad to keep as a Pledge in our memory as points of knowledge and erudition, but by which we do not think to rule our lives.

This disposition of our hearts must be considered as one of our greatest mischeifs, making Truth, which should be the remedy, to serve only to augment them by the bad usage we make of its light. For not being given us but as our Guide, we become unjust Possessors of it, when we do not use it for this end. We ought therefore to attempt all means to remedy this evil; and so how remote soever we may imagine our selves from truth, it is necessary that we force our selves to draw nearer to it, and make use of it as a Torch to search in the most hidden corners of our soul all that may be contrary thereto.

15. But if self-love have subtilty enough to stop in the most part of the world the effect of the most constant Truths, and whereof we are the most convinced, it does yet shift off more easily those which are disputed, either by contrary opinions formally maintained, or by an opposite practice. For it is
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the cause either that people, remaining in a doubt, do nevertheless act as if they were very certain of what they must believe in that disagreement of opinions, or that they do define for that party which favoureth their inclinations by so frivolous reasons that they are ashamed to tell them when they are obliged, or that they blindly follow the example of others, without so much as ever examining whether this example be satisfactory or not, or whether they may be freed from it before God in pledging to him that they have followed the common tract; and at last they know so well how to stop in this point their curiosity, that they apprehend nothing more then to see it too clearly.

It is not my design to decide here any of these points which I have called Contested, because there may be found persons in the Church who oppose them, either as their opinions, or as practising them. I say only that the quiet wherein those live who follow some base opinions without ever having examined them seriously, is visibly unreasonable, and cannot come except from the corruption of the heart, from a hatred for
Truth,

Truth, and from a desire which they have to satisfy their Passions, not being troubled for it by remorse of Conscience; and lastly from a fear of being obliged to Condemn themselves in respect of the time past, and to change their manner of living for the time to come. 'Tis that which stifles their fear, and hinders them from having, in regard of their Salvation, the same Sentiments which they approved in regard of all other things. If some able Physicians did tell them that such certain meats were poisoned, they would willingly abstain from eating of them, before they were assured that these Physicians were mistaken. If they had notice given them, That there was a Design of taking away their lives, that the houses were on Fire, they would give little or no belief to those who should tell them the contrary, without bringing them very good proof, they would not be wanting to dive into the bottom of these advices, nor could they be at quiet with themselves until they should be absolutely cleared of the truth thereof. From whence happens it then that when they hear that rational and understanding persons are convinced, That some things they practice are not

permitted, that they are capable to destroy them, that they are Condemned by the Law of God, as being Crimes, they are nevertheless so little moved thereat, that all seems to assure them? From whence comes it that they take so little pains to examin to the bottom the occasion of this Judgment or Opinion which is against them, or to discourse any of those who are perswaded of it, but that they stop at certain superficial reasons, and that provided they see themselves Authorized by a Rabble, whom other times they esteem very little either for Judgment or Piety, they think they have nothing to fear? Who sees not that 'tis their Passion that suspends their Reason, and hides from them the most common rules of Sense, which they cannot hinder themselves from seeing, if they were not as it were tyed by their heart, which fears to be disturbed in its Inclinations?

That which we ought to do to avoid this disorder so visible and so proper to cast us into, and keep us in blindness, is to establish, for an inviolable Principle of our Conduct, never to follow in the practical any of those opinions favourable to the inclination of Nature, and
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which are condemned by able men, unless we be fully assured that these men be deceived, and in an excess of security. Otherwise we shall not be able to free our selves from rashness, and the unadvised Acts which we commit by following a Rule so preposterous ought to be a warning for us that we deceive not our selves even in the bottom, and that 'tis the aversion we have for Truth that hinders us from acknowledging it.

17. It would not be sufficient to advance in the knowledge of ones self to be only instructed in the Principles of Truth, by which we ought to judge of our Actions, and of our State and Condition. Because, provided that we had never so little Sincerity to make the application of it, 'twould not be possible at least that our gross faults should remain absolutely unknown to us. But to form to our selves the *Idea* which ought to be had thereof, there must be added to the knowledge of Gods Laws that of his Grandeur, of his Bounty the infinite obligations we have to him, the Right which he hath over men in quality of Creator and Redeemer. There must be added the necessary Consequences of Sin, and we must look upon our

selves as Sinners reduced to the last degree of unworthiness and annihilation. *Vide Domine, & considera, quoniam sum vilis*; As deserving that all Creatures rise up against us, as being unworthy of all the Consolations and Comforts, of all the Assistance which we receive of him, and lastly as having no right to complain of any bad usage, because there is none which we do not deserve. But if we compare afterward those opinions which our Condition requires of us with those we really have, with this violent inclination for greatness, with this niceness and sensibility even in small and trivial things, with this Tiranical propensity, to be obnoxious to all men, and to relate all to our selves, it is impossible that we should not be amazed at so strange a Deposition, and so opposite to Reason and Justice.

18. Although these Considerations may be useful to all the World, they are nevertheless proper particularly to those who return to God after great Strayings. But there is another study of ones self much more tedious and difficult, and which makes the exercise of the Just even during their whole life. It consists in knowing those Passions,

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Humors, weakneses, defects, deceits, which self-love makes use of to hide them both from our selves, and others, and the secret Injustices wherein this Self-love engages us. 'Tis to what each one is obliged to apply himself unto with Care, as to the chief means to advance himself therein. For all the faults of the Just, as well the small ones as the important ones, do happen ordinarily, only because they do not know themselves enough, that they do not themselves justice enough; and that they dissemble, and keep close a great part of their faults from themselves.

19. The persuasion wherein one ought to be as to the importance of this Duty, and the application to practise it, which ought to spring from it, will make one presently discover a great number of faults. For it is certain, that that which ordinarily causes that the most part of our faults are unknown to us, is because as soon as we perceive any of them, we look another way, taking them for objects which incommode us, and so they make little or no impression upon our Minds. Likewise we look upon them only separately, as if we had only the fault which we are forced to see at
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that very moment. All those we have observed in passing by, remain as it were annihilated in regard of us. The inclinations and customs which remain, we reckon as nothing, and stopping also only at simple actions, and yet as slightly as possibly we can, we never have time to form an Idea of our selves, which is very humble.

We can make no progress in the study of our selves, but in correcting this fault, and taking a quite contrary way, which is to force the Mind to consider its faults and imperfections, with a serious application to annex one to another, according as they are discovered to endeavour to search to the bottom of it, to examin the cause of the passions, not to think they can be easily destroyed, being sometime without action, and to make use of this Image to humble our selves before God and Man.

In a word, we must act in this Study almost, as if we had undertaken to labour all our life time to draw our Portraictures, that is to say, we must add every day some strokes with the Pencil, but not put out what is already drawn therein ; so we shall observe sometimes one passion, sometimes another. To day

day we shall discover one delusion of Self-love, to morrow another. And by that means we shall form by little and little a Portraiture so like, that we shall see every moment even what we are, so that we shall have reason to say continually to our selves, behold what I am. See here what I have loved so much, and could wish that the whole World might be the object of its esteem and affection.

20. We must not forget, amongst the multitude of our faults, those which being only outward and involuntary, render us not properly guilty before God. For those are they, which oftentimes humble us the most in our own thoughts, because we are so vain, that we ordinarily judge of our selves, rather according to the report of men than truth. Moreover, these Faults rendring us incapable of certain actions and employments, ought to have place in the deliberations, which we make of entering or not entering into diverse engagements which might be proposed to us.

Lastly, as they make commonly many Impressions upon the minds of others, we are obliged to be very circumspect therein, because we ought partly to re-

gulate our behaviour concerning this Impression, which opens to us, or shuts the entrance to their Hearts, and disposes them to stumble, or not to stumble at our Actions.

21. Faults and Vertues ought equally to be the object of this Examen; because we must endeavour to know the extent, and the greatness of these Faults; and the limits and imperfections of these Vertues. The one and the other is necessary to form a true Idea of our selves, and we are equally deceived in the one and in the other, by the inclination Self-love gives us to hide, or lessen what we have that's naught, and to expose to view, or to encrease what we have that's good.

22. We ought not to judge simply of the greatness, and the extent of these faults in relation to the consequences, and the effects they have had, but in relation to the consequences and the effects they may have, if God hinder them not; because there is no passion but may be the cause of our utter ruin. Inconstancy, a little motion of choler, a word of vanity, an inordinate desire, a want of circumspection may oftentimes be followed with consequences which may change the

the whole state of our life. We shall know it clearly in the next world, and God will let us see there, that he hath made us escape a world of dangers, into which, the weight of our Concupiscence would have drawn us headlong, if he had not stopped the course of it. And we may likewise know some part thereof in this life, if we reflect upon what might happen to us from all the faults which we have committed, and on the excesses whereunto our passions might have carried us, if they had been violently excited by the objects, and favoured by occasions, and not hindred by the obstacles, which God placed there to keep them within certain boundaries, which make us acknowledge, that 'tis not through our moderation and wisdom, that we have escap'd these great inconveniences, but meerly by Gods mercy.

23. We must take away in the Examen of Vertues which we believe we have, what there is purely natural, and wherein Grace hath no share at all. For God, who ought to be the rule of all our judgments, makes no account of what comes from Nature. The effects of custome and habit, which is nothing but another

Nature must be taken away. There must be an absolute depriving our selves from the desire we have to please Men; and from other secret considerations from interests and passions, because all that is very bad. We must separate from it what we have destroyed by our ingratitude, and our sins, because, that not subsisting in the eyes of God, ought not to subsist in ours. We must consider how many of these Vertues, such as they are, have little extent, force and solidity: with how small zeal we carry our selves therein, and after all these separations, we must ask our selves what we have yet remaining.

24. Not only good Qualities, and Virtues are nothing in the sight of God; being destroyed by Crimes, but without having committed any, they become often useless, and even render us culpable by the little use we make of them. Because the gifts of God include always some new obligation. He expects more from those, to whom he hath given most. We owe him for the interest of his Favours and Graces; and if we fail to give it him, he would rather we had not received them. If he hath given us a favourable natural Condition; if he hath
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preserved us from temptations which carry away most part of others; if we have had little to contest within our selves; if he hath given us some good qualities of mind, some propensity, and inclination to vertue; Lastly if he hath bestowed on us vertue it self, we ought to look upon all that as Talents from God, yet only conditionall to encrease them, so that if we know we have not performed it, there is nothing ought to give us more confusion and fear.

25. We ought above all to consider the ill use we have made of all the Truths God hath been pleased to discover to us, be it in the elevating us thereby inwardly or outwardly, be it in prophaning them by indiscreet entertainments, or that we make use of them not to contemn or despise our selves, but others. For that is the use, or rather the most common abuse, that men make thereof. 'Tis impossible that those who know the Truths of the Gospel, should not see at the same time, how little they are observed by a great many, who at other times make profession of Piety.. We may see that they want light in many points, and that they commit divers considerable faults.

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And malice placing it self on that side, takes delight in busying it self about these defects. It exaggerates them, it stuffs it self with them, and thereby dissuades the Mind from whatever might be able to edifie it in those, in whom we observe them. Every thing wounds and shocks these so clear-sighted, but little charitable Men; If a Monastery do not follow the rules prescribed by the Canons of the Church, they do no more good in it, they busie themselves only in that, and make no accompt of what it hath otherwise of God: They have reason in what they condemn, but they have not to condemn it with so little meekness, humility and charity: so that they blame things oftentimes after a manner more blamable than the evil it self, by which they are hurt.

26. We may say that 'tis nothing but the want of will, which is able to prevent that we arrive not at this degree of Self-knowledge, being we imagin that Men do not apply themselves to this Examen, except in visible faults. What remains is more difficult, because it is active in giuing means to discover those which we cannot find in our selves, either for want of judgment, or else through

through the devices of Self-love. We hardly see any one, in whom we do not think to find some faults which are unknown to him; and as we ought to judge thereby, that this Illusion is very common, the less we can conclude of it is, that it is much to be feared, we are not more exempt from it than others.

We have likewise no reason to assure our selves, that these secret and hidden faults are not very considerable, and never capable to hinder Salvation. This is by no means true; the blindness wherein we are, is able to hide very important ones from us. How many for example, do we see, who not knowing their want of Understanding, do undertake Employments, and therein commit very great faults. Men chuse their Occupations and Employments ill, they slight those which are proper for them, and apply themselves to others in which they cannot prosper. Men ingage themselves in contests which have evil consequences; they think they are in the right when they are in the wrong, and upon this score they deal hardly with others; they excite murmurings against themselves; they destroy the whole Edification, they
were

were able to give by their other actions. There are some, who for want of knowing what they have that's troublesome in their humors and conducts, raise a coldness, and a disgust in the hearts of others, who disunite by this means whole Societies, who divert Persons from their way, and stifle in them the seeds which God has sown therein. There are some who serve as obstacles (not dreaming of it.) to many usefull and necessary things, because they do not know how to behave themselves in treating with them.

There are some, who by small ties, or wilfull preventions which they know not of, are hindred from satisfying these important Duties, the omitting of which becomes a scandal to those who see them act; and causeth great inconveniences. Lastly, it seldom happens, that these visible errors have not their beginning from those faults which men will not see.

27, This ought to suffice to make us joyn to the Examen, which we ought to make of our selves, what strength we can draw from others to know our selves better. There are several ways that it may be procured, but I shall only take notice:

notice of the two principal ones which comprehend many others. The one is in some sort to go before Truth it self, seeking it in the example and the instructions of other People; the other to suffer that it approach us, in giving it a free access, and taking away all obstacles which may hinder this approach.

28. We seek truth in other Mens examples, by the reflections we make on their Actions, which extend to their Vertues; and to their faults: Their Vertues instruct us in those we want, they convince us of our weakness and of our baseness, and they humble us by this comparison. It is enough also; oftentimes that there be some difference of light and conduct betwixt others and us, to give us thereby means to undeceive our selves. Because altho Self-love perswades us at first, that we have reason on our side; yet if we observe that other Mens conduct hath ordinarily good success, and that ours on the contrary hath always bad; we should be wilfull to believe that we are not in the wrong.

29. 'Tis almost the only means to acknowledge in ones self what Men call false judgment, which is a defect that makes

makes Men undertake cross businesses, engages them in false parties, in various opinions, and in evil arguments. For altho this same lack of judgment, which produceth these false Opinions, may be a hinderance to the direct acknowledging them; yet if it happen, that a man had the fortune to observe, that generally he was single in his sentiment, and that his thought were almost alway contrary to every Bodies else, he must be extreemly opinionated, to conclude from thence that he is in the right. And thus the least he can do is to be mistrustfull of his Judgment, and of the quality of his Understanding, and to consult sincerely upon the Points, in which he shall have some particular advices, the most able, and most disinterested Persons he knows, by endeavouring in good earnest to embrace their Reasons.

30. It is by so much more important to endeavour to be edified by other mens Vertues, and good qualities, by how much more we ought to acknowledge in us an inclination which separates us from them. Our wickedness hides part of them from us, and makes us apply our selves to those which it cannot hide from us; we absolutely either forget them,

them, or we scarcely take notice of those who have them, in these circumstances ; on the contrary, their faults make very deep impressions in our minds. We conserve of them very lively images, which present themselves on their own accord without the trouble of seeking them, and we renew continually these images and impressions by new Reflections, to hinder them from losing any thing of their force and strength. However we ought to do the contrary, seeing that whereas there are very few, who are charged to remedy other Mens faults, there is none on the contrary, God does not oblige to profit by their Vertues. For he proposes them to all those who see them as a living and animated instruction, for which he will demand an accompt one day, as of all the other favours he hath done them.

But it is not forbid to observe in others certain visible faults, and it is likewise impossible not to see what strikes upon our senses, we must try to make use of them, thereby to know ourselves better, and to the end we may draw this advantage from thence, we must first perceive some of those faults, we must ask our selves ; *Num. quid ego unquam*

unquam Imprudens facio simile huic ? Did not I fall my self into these Faults, which I observe in this Man? The occasion of making these kind of reflections, are but too common; because Self-love, which has a thousand tricks to conceal from us our proper faults, hath no less to discover those of others. And whereas its delicateness does scarcely permit us to look stedfastly upon our own, it renders us on the contrary clear-sighted in respect of those of others. We see them such as they are; we consider them as much as we will, we hardly trouble our selves to lessen them by favourable excuses; this effect comes doubtless from some bad causes. But keeping them within their boundaries some profit may be drawn from thence, and use made thereof to deceive in some sort Self-love. For by considering thus the faults of others without this multiplicity of considerations, and artificial excuses, which deceive us in ours, we may easily discover what is the false light which dazles them, how they have engaged themselves in this Illusion, what they ought to do to be delivered from it. And afterwards, in turning all these Considerations towards our selves, we
may

may easily apply them to our selves, if we have never so little sincerity, and desire to know our selves.

32. Unless we make use of this cunning to profit by the fault of another, which we cannot hinder our selves from seeing, they only blind us more instead of helping us to know our selves. For either we take occasion to slight those who fall therein by raising our selves above them, as if we were exempt, or if we acknowledge our selves guilty as well as they, we comfort our selves, that we alone are not subject to these Weaknesses. We are glad that they have not this advantage over us. We diminish the Idea we have of our own faults, as looking upon them common to many, and as being rather the consequences and infirmities of Nature than of our disorder. And thus we free our selves in some sort secretly from the reproaches of our Consciences, by hiding our selves in the throng of the Culpable.

33. But besides the Instructions which may be drawn out of other mens faults which we perceive by our selves, very important ones may likewise be drawn from the Judgments which we hear made.

made of them by those who entertain themselves with them. For we may learn that 'tis in vain to dissemble our own, and be angry at those who speak of them; we thereby only apply people more to do it. Because whereas they are ordinarily very indulging to the Imperfections of those who seriously acknowledge them, they do not suffer on the contrary patiently those which we would hide or canonize, and of which they do not permit us to speak with freedom. Although they be something reserved in speaking with those, of whom they have some reason to be distrustful, they may find always some one to whom they may speak freely; so by this means things are dispersed in secret from one to another, almost as if they did speak them publicly. So that we must shew that the only way to hinder men from speaking of our faults is to Correct them our selves, or to Testifie that we desire it seriously, and that we are well pleased to be put in mind of them.

34. We may learn by these Judgments that hardly any one knows what is thought of him, nor what Impression his Actions make upon the minds of others

others; from whence it happens, that in forming to our selves false opinions of their disposition, we take in conclusion false measures. We do not the Good we ought, nor prevent the Evil which we might; we disturb others a thousand several ways without knowing it, and we break thus by little and little all the ties which knit the union we have with them.

We perceive it well at the end of some of these bad effects, but that only increaseth the illusion we are in. For the lack of knowing the causes which are given them, we substitute false ones. We cast all the Blame on others, we attribute to them the Motives, Intentions, and Designs on which they never thought, and upon that we form of them very disadvantageous *Ideas*, which appearing without by some exterior marks do yet encrease the remoteness they have from us.

35. 'Tis true we must not absolutely rule our Conduct by the opinions and Impressions of others. But these Opinions and Impressions being uniform they give us often means to acknowledge, That this Conduct is not regulated according to Gods Laws; others being ordina-

ordinarily more subtil then we to discover what happens in us of Passion and Self-love. Even often times when these Impressions are unjust, they do not forbear to have some cause in us, the which we may remedy. In fine how unreasonable they are, as they may be either sharpen'd or sweeten'd by our Conduct, they may serve for obstacles to certain enterprises, and facilitate others, and we may sometimes take other courses to avoid them. It's always good to know them, provided we are able to undergo them.

36. We might obtain this advantage, and we might shun one part of the inconveniences if we did practice sincerely what is observed in *St. Thomas of Canterbury's* Life, which was that one of his Friends should advertise him of all that he found fit to tell him again in his Carriage. And it is what they had in Prospect who have ordered that in certain Religious Houses, That there should be one Person Charged to receive the complaints that each should make of the Superiors Behavior, to give him an account thereof, without naming the Authors. But as all the World cannot enjoy this Good we ought to endeavour
to

to supply it by procuring a faithful and understanding Friend to whom an entire liberty should be given to advertise us of what should be said of us in the World, and after what manner our actions might be taken therein.

37. It seems at first that the most part of the World do follow these advices, and that at least it is practiced by all persons who profess Piety. For there are none who have not a Confessor, and this Confessor ought to be that faithful friend who should advertise us of our faults, of the scandal which we cause, seeing that we give him that right in addressing our selves to him. He may know them so much better, as he joyns to the knowledge we give him of our selves, that which he sometimes may get elsewhere, and that thus he sees the limits of our light, that is to say, what we know of our selves, and what we know not. And as the practice of this Office of Charity makes one of the chief parts of his Ministry. There is hardly any one who does not flatter himself, That 'tis that he seeks in submitting himself to the Conduct of a Director, and who does not believe that he gives him in this point all the liberty which he can desire.

38. Whosoever will unfold these secret windings of his own heart, will find that although he think not to address himself to a Confessor except to draw from thence some help the better to know himself, he hath at the bottom of his heart a quite contrary end, and a secret design to make use thereof to justify himself in his faults, which is properly not knowing himself. This it is we do not take heed of to confess in our selves, seeing that on the contrary we know it not, and that we have also on the outward appearance of the mind a quite different thought. But Self-love which resides in the bottom of the Soul knows how to prosper there without our making any express reflections. See here the Artifice Self-love makes use of. We have two sorts of faults, the first which are the object of our Affection, and which we will not acknowledge for faults for fear of being obliged to disannul them; the others that we really condemn are those which we have no inclination to, and from which we would very willingly be delivered. Self-love makes us therefore first choose a Ghostly Father, who ought to judge of us almost as we would desire;

he; Afterwards it makes as it were a kind of Covenant and Bargain with him. Self-love tells him the faults it loves not: it is content that he find fault with them; as it would it self. But the Object of its principal Passions it scarcely puts under the Censure of the Confessor, and only chooses him, thinking that he will not concern himself with them.

- Therefore first we justify our Passions to our selves, and at last we seek a Ghostly Father to justify them. In a word we would have one who might not outgo us in direction, and who would conform in every thing, that is, we would he should approve and condemn what we our selves approve and condemn.

39. 'Tis that which is the cause that there being even amongst those who profess Piety so many strange and irregular Conducts, there is hardly any one nevertheless who wants a Director, if he will have one; and this Director is of no use to those that would choose him in this manner, but to stifle their remorses, and to make them live more quietly in the condition, out of which they have no desire to depart.

Thus we may define a Director in respect

spect of the most part of the World, a charitable Censurer of small faults, and light defects, and an Approver of passions, which we will not remove. We would not have a Director who would not find fault at all, and we would not have one neither who touches upon our beloved passions. These two Conditions are both equally essential; because, as it would be troublesome, if he did pretend to contradict us in what we resolve absolutely to do, he would serve our Self-love but ill, if he did not contradict us in some thing, our intention being to make use of his zeal against certain faults, to authorise us in those we would not acknowledge for such.

49. Therefore 'tis not sufficient to have a Director, nor even to have one learned. We must moreover abandon our selves to him without dissimulation and artifice, and resolve to conform our selves to the judgment he makes of us, and not to incline him to follow ours. Lastly, we must be ready to learn from him to know our selves better, and be glad of his aid and assistance therein, without prescribing him limits. 'Tis the disposition all the World ought to be in, but 'tis not necessary that it be perfect,

perfect, or rather it is impossible that it should be so. Because there is no man upon Earth, who hath humility enough, and force to support, without being discouraged and afraid of the sight of the least sin in its natural greatness; and it is true to say of all our known sins in their greatest extent, what the Scripture said of God. *Non videbit me homo, & vires.* Thus to take a proportionable Conduct, both of the necessity we all have of Truth, and to the weakness which renders us incapable of undergoing it in all its force, we must wish ardently to know it. We must embrace with docility what is discovered of it to us; we must believe that we are mightily spared, and labour nevertheless to become more strong, to the end we may be less obliged to spare our selves.

41. We would doubtless advance hugely in this self-knowledge, if we really had this disposition in the heart, by treating with the Confessor we have chosen. But we must however not grant only to this Confessor the right of discovering to us our faults, and the evil consequences of our actions. On the contrary, it would be just to stretch

this right as far as we can possible; and to give it also in some sort to all the World, seeing there is not any to whom we are not answerable, and whom we are not able to hurt and scandalize. How circumspect soever a Confessor may be, he sees not always our actions; he hears not all we say, he knows not always the impressions our words and our actions make upon others; and it is scarcely, except from those who perceive them that they can be learnt. One should therefore learn the custom of being less delicate in this point, and give all the world an honest liberty. Possibly we should receive oftentimes advertisements less censurable. But if we will receive only those which shall appear altogether reasonable, we shall receive none at all. For men will never charge themselves with so severe an exactness, and they will much sooner loose the Party by saying nothing at all to us, than expose themselves to hurt us, if what they should say did not appear to us absolutely just.

We must on the other side suppose, that every one being prepossessed on the one part, that he loves not to be admonished of his faults, and on the o-
ther

ther unwilling to show any aversion upon him, is disposed by this means to free himself from rendring us this charitable office, and to tell us nothing what he thinks of us, nor what he knows others think of us. Thus except we remove this obstacle, and go as it were before Truth, in exciting others to tell it us, intertestifying to them in an unsuspected manner, that we think our selves in some sort obliged that they should do it, and thus dispersing the fear they have of rendring themselves odious, they will always observe with us this deceitfull reservedness, which entertains and keeps us in ignorance of many things which would be very necessary to be known.

42. We must not imagin, that it is sufficient to receive without being moved, the advices which are given us, and to thank those who run the hazzard of giving us them. For it is well enough known to all the World, that, as it is a shame to shew that one is offended at them, so we endeavour to do our selves honour in being civil upon these occasions. But we must persuade People that these civilities are sincere; and it is that which cannot be without shunning many things, which the World take for marks of a

secret discontent, and spite, which we are afraid to discover.

43. We must not pretend for example, that they ever take the liberty to advise us of any thing, if they see that we have no union and tye, but with those who enter absolutely into all our Sentiments; and that we testify to all others nothing but driness and coldness.

If they see, that after this confidence which they shall have shewn us, we enter into a reservedness of mind, that we find our selves entangled every time we are with them, and that we act no more after a free and natural manner. If they see that to have more right to reject the Advice which is given us, we give an evil censure of it; that we seek every where for People; who condemn them by proposing them after an odious fashion; if we seek in the persons of those, who give them wherewith to deery their Judgments; if in occasions which present themselves, we speak of them with more sharpness then ordinarily. Lastly if they be aware, that that hath made a wound in our heart, let us be mindfull of it, and let us mingle on purpose in our Discourses

courses certain affected Apologies relating to the things we have been advertised of. If we do not avoid, say I, all those things which shew us to be inwardly grieved, we must not hope that they will stop at words of Civility, which are destroyed by so many marks of secret discontent, and those real.

44. 'Tis the sentiment of a wise Pagan, that he who is advertised of any fault, ought not to do the same presently, in respect of him from whom he doth receive this advertisement, and that he ought to expect an other time to render him this office. But this advice must be stretched much farther; for we must not only not reprehend upon the place those who reprehend us, but we must also avoid reprehending them when there is reason to suspect, that any secret spite should have open'd our eyes to see their faults, and made us attentive to observe them. We ought to suppose they are in pain to know the effect of the Advices they have given, and that they will perceive the least sign which we shall give of disapproving. That they will refer to this cause all they shall remark in us of coldness, and aversion to them, which might render

der these advices unprofitable to them, and give them leave to make a rash judgment of us. And this is it which obliges us to stand upon our guards on that side, and to testify to them even more freedom and confidence, than we would have done at another time.

45. It is so much more important to preserve this conduct towards those, who run the hazard of giving us this Advice; because in acting otherwise we do not shut the mouth only of one or two Persons, but almost generally to all the World. Because there needs but two or three rencontres of this nature, to get ones self the reputation of being very nice, and to pass in the minds of those who know us for People, who love not that we should speak freely to them. Now after this impression is formed, 'tis a very strong barr against Truth. Each man seeks pretences to free himself from the speaking to those Curious men. We fear always to disturb and vex them. Thus in doubt we ordinarily take the way of being silent, and to say nothing to them that may be disagreeable.

46. The Great ones and Princes complain, and Reason shews, that they are mis-

miserable in this, that their greatness is the cause that Truth dare not approach them, and that they pass thus all their life in Illusion. But certainly we have not less cause to complain in this point of the most part of those, who are in any esteem in the World. For they are not Princes by Birth, they are Princes by Humor, in dispersing amongst all those who come near them, certain terrors which hinder their most intimate Friends from speaking freely to them. From hence it happens, that oftentimes they are not informed what is made use of for entertainment to all the World; for they think to be approved in what is almost universally condemned, and lastly take almost in all things false measures.

47. It is much more important to avoid the appearing of this humor, because when this self Impression is given, even our Friends believe they are obliged by Charity to dissemble their Opinions, and to leave us to our own

wills. St. *Austin* complains. *Aug. Ep.* as of one of the chief difficulties which is met within the

Commerce of this life, that when Men approve not something in the words or writings of someone, and that they dis-

cover to them this opinion in the belief that Christian liberty doth oblige us to make use of it thus, it happens often, that these Advices pass for effects of jealousie, rather than of amity. He represents these evil suspicions as a considerable fault, and at the same time very frequent, and he says that oftentimes they cause divisions and enmities amongst Persons very well united. Nevertheless, he cannot tell himself any other remedy for this evil, but by suppressing these Sentiments, when we have business with Friends of this humor. If I can, said he to St. Jerome, expose freely to you what appears defective in your Writings, and that you cannot do the same in respect of mine, without rendring our selves suspected of distrust for one another, and of want of Friendship, let us rather leave all that, and not put our lives and Salvations in danger. Let something of science rather be wanting, which doth smell, provided that we hurt not Charity which doth edifie. And in another of his Letters, Methinks, said he, we ought to treat together not only with Charity, but also with Liberty and Friendship, and that thus we ought not to dissemble, what may be displeasing in our Writings, provided that we do it with a Spirit which

God

God approves in Brotherly Charity. But if you think that we cannot use this conduct one towards the other, without the danger of hurting Charity, we shall do better to abstain from it. For altho this sort of Charity, which I desired we might practise together, be very excellent; nevertheless, it is better to entertain our selves in this other to which you have reduced me, than to have none at all. *Ille enim Charitas quam tecum habere vellem major est profecto, sed melior hæc minor quam nulla est.* If a Saint found himself obliged to do thus towards another Saint, we see easily that we may well be reduced to do it towards others, and thus even Charity demands sometimes, that we live in this reserve with our Friends, when they give no more overture to discover to them their Sentiments.

48. Besides the reputation of delicateness, there is yet another which strangely hinders even our Friends from speaking freely with us, 'tis that of being tyed to our own Sense, and strongly opiated of our thoughts. Because having given this Idea of our selves, hardly any body ventures to gainsay us, especially if we have some consideration which perswades Men to deal warily with

with us. Thus every one is reserved, and leaves us to believe what we have a mind, mocking often at us inwardly. But they will say; Is it only that we may not pass for Opinators in the minds of those, who would be believed in all they propose; that we shall be forced to grant, that we approve Opinions which in effect we do not, and yeild to all the Advices the first comer shall think good to give us? 'Tis by this means that People justifie in themselves and flatter themselves, that their stubbornness, and their inflexibility in their Sentiments, proceed only from the love they have for Truth. But it is easie to convince them, that one may avoid the reputation of being tied to ones own sense, without approving all the thoughts of others, which would be a very great fault. To do this, 'tis but to distinguish reasonable Certainty which is a Vertue, from Self-opinion which is a vice.

49. We cannot justly force whomsoever he be, to yeild to our Judgments, not being convinced; nor yet accuse him, of being obstinate. Because if it is through knowledge that he is not persuaded of it, he is praise-worthy for
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not yeelding to what is false; If it is lack of understanding, and of light he may accused of these faults, but not of that of being obstinate. Also the world does not commit this injustice, when we give it elsewhere what it hath a right to exact from us. See here in what it consists. Tho men in this life be not absolutely incapable of knowing any truth certainly; yet there are so many things which they see but obscurely, and they are so often deceived in taking that for a certainty, which indeed is not so, in considering objects confusedly, and in not seeing therein all that is necessary to judge by, that the least they ought to do, is to have a general distrust of their sentiments and thoughts, when they are not expressly confirmed by Faith, and the Authority of the Church. This distrust causes not them to be indetermined, and that they do not take some part, but it hinders them from proposing their thoughts with a determinative Air, and to be troubled when they are contradicted. This distrust makes them give ear, and examine seriously the reasons alledged against their Opinions. Lastly, it makes them slight the Opinions they approve not of.

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main perswaded that they should have
disposed to embrace them, if they had
had light enough to penetrate into the
Reasons. This is the disposition the
World doth force from us, and with
Reason, because we ought to have it in
effect. And the contrary to this disposi-
tion, that is to say, that assurance which
excludes even general distrust, that deter-
minative Air, that manner of rejecting
other mens Opinions without taking al-
most the pains to examin them; as if
they were incapable of finding out the
Truth, or of being deceived, is that
properly, which men call being Opini-
onator.

'Tis that which repulses the World,
and hinders it from speaking freely to
us, because 'tis always imagin'd that it
would be in vain; for when we have ef-
fous'd a cause, we never forsake it; but
after having contested soundly, we al-
ways think that we have Reason, and
that others have not. Thus every one
had rather leave all in that Condition,
and abandon us to our own light with-
out proposing theirs to us.

50. We produce almost the same bad
Effects, if without contesting and shew-
ing.

ing wilfulness, we remain nevertheless in a certain coldness, without appearing either to approve or disapprove the liberty which our Friends take in telling us their opinions. For as they are naturally inclin'd to believe, that this liberty is not pleasing to us, and that they are in distrust upon this point; Whosoever destroys not this Impression by his Air, and by his way of answering, gives leave to believe, that he would willingly that it may subsist or remain, and his silence being taken with probability for a token of discontent, the World thinks it self freed from making for the future the like attempts.

51. If we be carefull to avoid these, and such-like faults, we may engage our true Friends to tell us sometimes what they think of our Actions, and to let us know after what manner the World takes them. But to judge well of what they tell us we must observe this rule, that as Natural Complacency, fear of troubling, and civility it self, obliges those who speak to us of our faults to moderate themselves much in their expressions; If we will know their Judgment exactly, we must add of our selves what is wanting in their words, and not imagin

imagin that these thoughts come into their mind with all these restrictions, and these mollifications which they use in proposing them to us. Let us endeavour therefore, that they tell us only some small part of what is judged of us, and that we must multiply in some sort all that is said of us to find out the Truth. If they tell us, that they have some little to contradict in some thing we have done, that signifies that there is therein much to be gainsaid. If they say they make some difficulty in some Argument, that means that they believe it false and ridiculous. If they tell us that they cannot without difficulty enter into any of our thoughts, that is, they disapprove and condemn them. If they give us notice that there are some People who harm themselves by certain Actions, that is to say, there are a great number who are scandalized at them. Lastly, it must be supposed that the language of Advertisements is a particular Language; that we do express ourselves therein but by halves; that they are nothing but perpetual silences, and that unless we supply and understand it at half Sentences, we are deceiv'd by those even who strive to undeceive us.

52. If man had as much subtilty and craft for what relates to his Happiness as generally he hath for his Interests, he would not only discover the Truth from under some little Clouds, the goodness and Prudence whereof might serve to sweeten and temper it, but he would even distinguish it in the most profound obscurity of Fiction and dissimulation. We alter it by the fiction of flatteries; we dissemble it by silence; But very often it relies only on us to distinguish it in the one and the other. Because there is always something of Truth in flattery it self, and Silence hath also its Language; which hath caused Sr. Jerom. to call the silence of Sr. Hir. Ep. 3. *Aselle, Silentium loquens.*

53. To Comprehend what there may be of Truth in flattery we need only to distinguish the precise sense of expressions from the thoughts which they give us leave to read in the mind of those who make use of them. There is no Truth at all in the precise sense of the expressions of Flatterers; seeing that we take here the term of Flattery for a false Praise. But they give leave to know many of their thoughts, and to instruct

instruct us by these thoughts of many Truths which concern us.

The first is, when they give these Praises, they believe the quite contrary what they say, and condemn as much in their hearts those to whom they give them as they do testify outwardly esteem for them.

The second is drawn from the nature of some Praises which they choose. For they take ordinarily the substance of things truly Praise-worthy, which they falsely attribute to those they desire to flatter. Thus those to whom we give Praises ought not to conclude from thence neither, That they have these qualities effectually which are attributed to them, nor that there are people who believe it, but only these qualities are Praisable in themselves, and that it were to be wished that they had them, that is to say, that they might learn by that not what they are, but what they ought to be. 'Tis a reflexion St. *Augustino* made upon the Praise *Cicero* gave to *Cæsar*, *To forget nothing but Injuries*, *Nihil oblivisci nisi Injurias*. *Dicebat hoc*, said he, *tam magnus Laudator, aut tam magnus Adulator, sed si Laudator talem Cæsarem noverat, si autem Adulator, talem esse debe-*

re ostendebat Principem Civitatis, qualem illum fallaciter predicabat. What Cicero said to Cæsar, said this Father, was either a great Praise, or a great Flattery: If it was a Praise he ought to believe that Cæsar was really such an one: If it was a flattery he shew'd always thereby, that he who Commands an Estate ought to have these qualities which he attributed falsely to Cæsar.

The third thing that Flattery teacheth us is of the same kind as the first. 'Tis, that the Flatterer believes not only what he says, but he imagins moreover that he whom he flatters is Fool enough to let himself be deceived by his flatteries, and to take them for sincere Praises. And as we cannot approve false Praises but by flattering our selves, every Flatterer condemns, in himself, of illusion and vanity, that man to whom he addresses his flatteries. This is the Judgment of it. Lastly, as it is by Interest and not by inclination that we are inclined to flattery, and that we make use thereof only as a means to obtain of the great ones what we pretend, flatterers must judge, That those to whom they give these false Praises are mightily in love with themselves to be gained by

by such gross deceits. So that if all that is in the mind of a Flatterer were laid open and explicated, it might be reduced to this strange Complement. *Sir, I believe nothing of these Praises I give you, I have for you all the just disdain you deserve; but knowing that you are vain enough to believe that men have in their heart the Sentiments of Esteem which I shew you, and that the excess of love you have for your self will be able to dispose you to do me the favours I desire, I thought that to obtain them, I ought to attempt a way which ought to bring the contrary.* Behold what the Great may see in the minds of most people who Praise them, if they can add to the expression of these Flatterers what they are able to gather from their thoughts. But as that would incommode them, they had rather penetrate less, and stick at the appearances of words. And 'tis by the knowledge men have of this disposition that they run the hazard to use this wicked means.

54. The language of silence, is what silence it self makes known in the minds of those who are silent for certain Considerations. For Example, when we avoid speaking of a certain fault before Great men, that signifies we believe them

them subject to it, and that we are afraid, lest they should take to themselves what might be said of it. In like manner, when in their presence we omit to praise certain Persons, it is interpreted, that we imagin they love them not, and that they have a prejudice against them. Thus they need but to observe the Discourses that are forborn before them, to know what prejudices, and what faults are laid to their charge. And as nothing is spoken of so much in mens absence, as things which we dare not speak in their presence, they may also judge by these Discourses which we never make before them, what are those which are often discoursed of when we are far removed from them.

55. The practice of these means is not only usefull to make us know many defects which we are ignorant of, but it is very proper to obtain of God the assistance of his Lights in this study of our selves to which we apply our selves. Nevertheless what progress we may make therein, we must not pretend ever to arrive at that pitch of knowing ourselves perfectly. Man hath always in his heart so long as he is in this life,
some

some abuses impenetrable to all these diligent searches. And it is likewise one part of the Knowledge we may have of our selves, to comprehend that we do not know our selves with assurance, in what even appears most Essential, and most important. For we never know certainly what is called the bottom of the Heart, or that first propensity of the Soul, which makes her either belong to God or the Creature. I would say, that we know not certainly that we belong to God, altho' we may know assuredly that we are not so.

We know not with an entire assurance the Habitation of God in the Soul, as in his Temple, because 'tis an attendant of the first Propensity of the Heart.

We know not absolutely in the particular actions, whether the Love of God is the Principle of them, or whether Nature and Custom did not borrow the Form of the Love of God.

None knows absolutely if his sins be forgiven, he knows not the precise degree of his weakness or force, he knows not what God imputes, or not imputes to us of the continual productions of our Concupiscences.

Lastly,

Lastly, We know not evidently either the nearness or the remoteness of God. For often we think we have Grace, when the Mind is taken up only with thoughts, and quite natural motions, and often even we take for motives of Nature true Operations of Grace.

We ought therefore suppose, that with all our Study, and all our diligent Scrutinies, we shall always remain unknown to our selves in this Life. But as this necessary Ignorance is in the Order of God, we bear it humbly, and believe likewise that it is necessary for us to continue therein. There is nothing but voluntary Ignorance that we ought to shun, because it is contrary to this Order.

56. In a word, we ought not to desire to know our selves more than God pleaseth. And God will not that we know our selves more than is necessary to make us humble, and to govern our selves. Thus every Application to dive to the bottom of the Heart, which is not inclosed within its limits, is not agreeable to God, nor usefull to us.

We must not therefore busy our selves in such a manner about our faults, left

lest that under pretence of avoiding Presumption, we fall into despair and trouble. Therefore whatever may be said of this Portraiture, which we must attempt to make of our selves, if it happen nevertheless that we were so frightened at these Objects, that the Soul might thereby be overwhelmed, it would be better a great deal to turn it another way, and to busie it only about Gods Mercies.

57. Care yet ought to be had in the whole Examination of our actions and interior motions, to do our selves the same justice that we think we are obliged to do to others, that is to say, not to condemn our selves without Evidence.

It is true, that we are ignorant whether our better Actions are good and agreeable to God, but yet we know much less whether they are disagreeable.

There are intermixt therewith many human and corrupted Considerations, but we cannot tell whether they be voluntary, and what part thereof we have, whether they are not pure motives of Concupiscence, which God doth not impute to us, or temptations of the Enemy which render us yet less guilty.

We

We acknowledge in us a great stock of Corruption, but this stock whatever it be, doth not render us guilty when there is another stock of the Love of God and Justice, which possesseth our hearts.

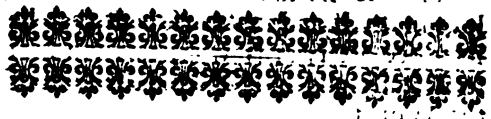
We have committed, and we commit hourly an Infinity of faults, but God pardons also hourly this infinity of faults, when we return to him with a true and sincere humility. And thus we cannot tell whether these faults do subsist before his eyes.

What therefore must be done in this Ignorance? We must humble our selves under the Hand of God, but not condemn our selves; because that would be to attribute to our selves a Knowledge which we have not.

58. Lastly, The principal Precaution that ought to be had in the study of ones Self, is, not to apply ones self so absolutely to it, but joyn it always with the infinite Mercies of God, which surpass so much all our miseries, that they are only as a drop of water in the Ocean. 'Tis therefore in this immense Sea that we must drown them, with an entire confidence. Considered in themselves they are great, but compared to

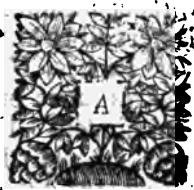
the infinite Greatness of Gods Love for us, and the price he hath given to deliver us, they are nothing. They ought to humble us without casting us down, as the Mercy of God to comfort us without elevating us. God was willing to give us these two great objects of our misery and his Mercy to keep our Soul in *Equilibrium*, or even ballance. There is always danger in considering the one without the other, in the union of these two Considerations, establish the Soul in the true state, wherein she ought to be during this Life, which is that of the wholsome fear grounded upon the consideration of our miseries, and an humble confidence maintained by Gods Mercy.

The



The Second Treatise.

Of Charity and Self-love.



1. **A**ltho there is nothing so opposite to Charity which relates all to God, as Self-love which relates all to it self, yet there is nothing so resembling the effects of Charity, as those of Self-love. For it marches so by the same ways, that one can hardly point out those better whereunto Charity ought to carry us, than in proposing those which Self-love takes, which knows its true Interests, and inclines by reason to the end it proposes it self.

2. This conformity of Effects in Principles so different, will not appear strange to those who shall have well

considered the nature of Self-love. But to know it he must first consider Self-love in it self, and in its first bent, that he may see afterwards what carrieth him to disguise and hide it from the sight of the World.

3. The name of Self-love is not sufficient to make us know its nature; being we may love our selves divers ways. We must add thereunto other qualities to form to our selves a true Idea of it. These qualities are, that Man doth not only love himself, but he loves himself without limits, and without measure; loves only himself, and refers all to himself. He covets all sort of Riches, Humors, Pleasures, and desires none but for, or in relation to himself. He makes himself the Center of all; he would Lord it over all, and could wish that all Creatures were only employed to content him, to praise him, and to admire him. This tyrannical disposition being stamped in the bottom of all mens Hearts, renders them violent, unjust, cruel, ambitious, flatterers, envious, insolent and quarrellous. In a word, it includes the seeds of all the crimes, and of all the misdemeanors of men, from the smallest, even to the most detestable

testable ones. See here what a monster we harbour in our bosoms. This monster lives, and reigns in us absolutely, except God destroy its empire by putting another love into our hearts. It is the Principal of all our actions, which have no other then corrupted Nature: And so far is it from terrifying us that we love, and hate all things which are out of us, only as they are conform or contrary to our Inclinations.

4: But if we love it in our selves, we are far from using it so when we perceive it in others. It appears then to us, on the contrary under its natural form, and we hate it by so much more, as we love our selves, because Self-love of other men opposes all the desires of ours. We would that all others should love us, admire us, buckle under us, and that they should be busied with the care of satisfying us. And they have not only no desire thereto, but they look upon us as ridiculous in pretending to it, and they are ready to do all, not only to hinder us from succeeding in our desires, but to make us obnoxious to theirs, and to require the same things of us. Behold then by this means all men at

difference one with another; And if he

who hath said, that Men are born in a state and condition of War, and that each man is naturally an enemy to all other men, had a mind only to represent by these words the disposition of the Hearts of men, one towards another, without pretence of passing it for legitimate and just; he would have said a thing as conform to Truth and Experience, as that which is maintained is contrary to Reason and Justice.

5. It cannot possibly be imagined how there can be formed Societies, Commonwealths, and Kingdoms out of this multitude of People full of passions, so contrary to Union, and who only endeavour the ruin of one another. But Self-love which is the cause of this war, will easily tell the way how to make them live in peace. It loves Domination, it loves to enslave all the World to it, but it loves yet more life and convenientness, and an easie life more than Domination; and sees clearly that others are no ways disposed to suffer themselves to be domineered over, and are sooner ready to take away from it the Goods it loves best. Each man sees himself in an impossibility of succeeding by force in the designs which his Ambition suggests to him,

him, and apprehend likewise the losing by that violence of others the essential Good he possesseth. 'Tis that which obliges a Man to submit ones self to the care of his own Preservation, and there is no other way found for that, but to unite ones self with others, to bear back by force those who undertake to deprive us both of our lives and fortunes. And to strengthen this Union, laws are made, and punishments ordered for those who violate them. Thus by the means of tortures, and gibbets set up in publick, the thoughts and tyrannical designs of every particular man Self-love are withheld.

A Fear of death is then the first tie of Civil Society, and the first check of Self-love. 'Tis that which forceth Men, what aversion soever they may have to obey the Laws, and which makes them in such a manner forget these vast thoughts of Domination, that they hardly are rais'd any more in the thoughts of the most part of them, so impossible they see it is for them to prosper therein.

Thus being themselves excluded from the open violence, they are constrained to seek other ways, and to substitute

craft for force, and they find therein no other means than to endeavour to content the Self-love of those whom they have need of, instead of tyrannizing over them.

Some endeavour to make it fit for their Interests, others employ flattery to gain it. Gifts are bestowed to obtain it. This is the source and foundation of all Commerce practised amongst men, and which is varied a thousand ways, For they do not truck merchandises for merchandises or for money, but they mutually traffick, I mean they make a trade also of labours and toyls, of services done, of diligence and assiduity, of civility; and Men exchange all that either for things of the same nature, or for real goods, as when by vain complacencies we obtain Effective commodities.

'Tis thus that by the means and help of this Commerce, all necessities for this life are in some sort supplied without intermixing Charity with it. So that in Estates, where Charity hath no admittance, because true Religion is banished from thence, men do not cease to live with as much peace, safety and commodiousness, as if they were in a Republick of Saints.

7. 'Tis

7. 'Tis not that this tyrannical Inclination which makes us have a desire to rule and govern by force over others, is not always lively in the hearts of Men. But as they see themselves unable to prosper therein, they are forced to dissemble it; untill they are strengthened by gaining others by sweet ways; to have afterwards the means to bring others to their bent by force. Every one therefore is mindfull at first to occupy the first Rank of the Society he is of; and when he sees himself excluded, he thinks of those which follow. In a word, he extolls himself the most he can, and he humbles himself only by constraint. In every state, and in every condition he endeavors always to acquire to himself some Preheminence, Authority, Intendency, Consideration, Jurisdiction, and to dilate his power as much as he can. Princes wage war with their Neighbors; that they may enlarge the limits of their Estates. The Officers of several Companies in one and the same Country, undertake and intrude upon one another: They strive to supplant them, and to humble each other in all their Employments, and in all their Offices. And if the wars which are made there are not

so bloody as those which Princes make :
 'Tis not because the passions are not as quick and sharp, but 'tis for the most part because they dread the punishment, which the Laws threaten to those who have recourse to violent ways.

8. I see nothing more proper to represent this Spiritual world formed by Concupiscence, than the Idea which some Philosophers give us of the material World made by Nature, that is to say, of that Assembly of Bodies which compose the Universe. Because we see there, that every part of Matter tends naturally to move and to dilate it self, and to issue out of its place, but being pressed by other Bodies it is confin'd to a kind of prison, from whence it escapes so soon as it finds that it has more power and force than the matter wherewith it is environed. Behold already the Picture of Constraint, whereto the Self-love of each particular is reduced by that of others, which does not permit it to set it self out at large so much as it would. We are going to see all the motions in the sequel of this Comparison. For these little confin'd Bodies coming to muster up their forces, and their motions do form great heaps of matter, which

which Philosophers call Whirlwinds, which are as States and Kingdoms; And these Whirlwinds are themselves pressed and imprisoned by other Whirlwinds, as it were by neighbouring Kingdoms. They likewise will, that in each Whirlwind there are formed other small ones, which following the general motions of the great Bodies which draw them, have nevertheless a particular motion, which does force yet other small Bodies to turn round about them, which represents the Grandees of State, who follow them in such a manner, that they have their particular Interests, and are as the Center of a quantity of People who fix themselves to their Fortune. Lastly, as these little Bodies drawn by the Whirlwinds, do yet turn as much as they can upon their own Center, so likewise the little ones which follow the fortune of the Grandees and that of the State, do not forbear with all their endeavours and all their services, which they render them, to look upon themselves, and to have always their own proper Interest in prospect.

So That which self-love covers particularly in Sovereignty, is, that we be regarded and looked upon by others as great

great and powerful; and that we stir up in their hearts motions of respect and submission, conform to these *Ideas*. But however it may be the Impressions which are most agreeable to it are not, yet the only ones wherewith self-love doth nourish it self. It generally loves all those things which are favourable to it, as admiration, respect, constancy; and chiefly love. There are many who scarcely do what they ought, to make them beloved, but there are none who do not desire to be loved, and who do not behold with great pleasure, this Propensity in others, turned towards them, which is that which is called love. What if it appear that we labour not much to obtain this love? 'Tis because we had rather give sentiments of fear and submission under Greatness, or because, desiring too passionately to please certain persons, we trouble our selves very little to please others.

10. Yet this does not hinder but that even when we are carryed away by more strong Passions, we behave our selves after a fashion very improper to make us be beloved, yet would be beloved, and do not perceive our selves incommoded, when we see in the minds of others

others motions of hatred and aversion. There are likewise many people, in whom this inclination of making themselves be beloved is stronger than that of Domineering and Lording over men, and who fear more mens hatred and aversion; and the judgments which produceth it, then they love to be rich and powerful. Lastly whereas there are few great ones, and few likewise who are able to aspire to greatness, on the contrary there are none who cannot pretend to make himself be beloved.

11. If the desire of being loved is not then the strongest Passion which springs from self-love, at least it is the most general. The considerations of Interest, of Ambition, of Pleasure, stop many times the effects of it, but they do it not effectively. It is always active at the bottom of the Heart, and so soon as it is at liberty, it forbears not being active, and to make us desire all that is able to procure us the love of Men, as it makes us avoide all whatsoever we think may draw upon us their hatred. It is true, we are sometimes deceived in the distinction which we make of these things, which draw love or hatred, and that there are some who judge thereof

thereof much better, and more nicely than others. But be it that we are deceived therein, or that we be not, 'tis always the same Passion which acts, and which stirs us seeks the same Object. There is also a common distinction for all Men, even to a certain degree, that is to say, they know every one, even to some point, that certain actions excite hatred, and others cause love.

12. It is not needfull to dive further into the description of the retreats of Self-love, to comprehend how it imitates very much Charity. It is sufficient to say that Self-love hindring us through fear of chastisement to violate the Laws, doth remove us by this means outwardly from all the Crimes, and renders us like to those who avoid them through Charity. That as Charity comforts the necessities of others in the sight of God, who will that we acknowledge his Favours in helping one Neighbour. Likewise Self-love comforts them in the sight of their proper Interest. And that lastly, there is hardly any action where in we are carried by Charity that would please God, whereas Self-love cannot engage us to please Men.

13. But the Self-love tends in these three

three motions to counterfeit Charity, we must for all that allow that the last comes nearer to it, and that it is much more extended than the two others. For there are many occasions, where neither fear nor interest have any place. And we distinguish often easily enough what we do, either through Human fear or through absolute Interest, from what we do by a motive of Charity. But it is not the same of Love, and esteem for Men. This inclination is so nice, and subtle, and at the same time of such a latitude, that there is nothing it cannot enter into, and it knows so well how to trim it self up with the appearances of Charity, that it is almost impossible to know exquisitely what distinguishes it from Charity. Because marching in the same steps, and producing the same effects, it defaces with a marvellous subtilty all the signs, and characters of Self-love from whence it springs, because it sees very well that it could obtain nothing of what it pretends, if they were taken notice of. The reason of it is, because nothing doth draw upon us so much the thing called Aversion, as Self-love, and because it cannot shew it self without exciting it. We experience
this

this our selves in regard of the Self-love of others. We are not able to suffer it so soon as we discover it, and it is easie for us to judge by that, that they are not more favourable to ours when they discover it.

'Tis this which inclines those who are sensible of the hatred of men, and who love not to expose themselves thereunto to endeavour to withdraw as much as in them lies, their Self-love from the sight of others, to disguise and counterfeit it; never to shew it under its natural shape, to imitate the behaviour of those who would be intirely exempt from it, that is to say, persons animated with the spirit of Charity, and who would not act but through Charity.

14. This suppression of Self-love, is properly that which makes human Civility, and shews in what it consisteth. And 'Tis this which hath caused a learned Man of this Age, to say that Christian virtue destroys & annihilates Self-love, and that human Civility hides and suppresses it.

Thus this Civility which hath been the Idol of the learned Pagans, is nothing at the bottom, but a Self-love more intelligent, and exact than that of the generality of the World, which
knows

knows how to shun what hurts its designs, and which tends to its mark, which is the esteem and love of Men by a more straight and reasonable way, in shewing how Self-love doth imitate the principal actions of Charity.

15. 'Tis no hard matter to comprehend in what manner Charity renders us humble. For making us love Justice, which is God himself, it makes us hate injustice, which is contrary to him. Now 'tis an injustice very visible, that being as we are full of faults, and guilty of so many sins, we would be honoured of Men, and that we should pretend to deserve their Praises either by Human qualities, and so consequently vain and frivolous, or by gifts, which we have received of God, and which do not belong unto us. It is not just that a sinner be honoured, but it is just that he be humbled and brought low. 'Tis the eternal Law which ordains it, & Charity consents to this law. Charity loves it, and by the love which it bears to it, embraces with joy all humiliations and humblings. Charity makes us hate all that smells of pride and vanity; and as it condemns these motions when they start up in our hearts, it hinders them also from appearing without by words
and

and actions, which it reduces thus to an exact modesty..

16. Yet there is nothing in this, but what Self-love imitates perfectly ; For seeing the Heart of each man turned absolutely towards it self, and naturally an enemy to the preferring any other ; It dares not expose it self to their thought and malignity,

Whoever praises himself, and sets to sale what he thinks he hath that's good, pretends thereby to bring others to him, and 'tis almost the same thing, as if he beg'd of them to give him praises, and to look upon him with esteem and love. Now there is hardly any prayer which appears more uncivil, and more incommensurable to Self-love, which men hear themselves, than this. It is angry and vexed at it, and answers only by scoffing and disdain. Thus those who are cunning enough to know these tricks and devices, avoid making these kind of demands, that is to say, they keep themselves generally to a distance from all that seems vanity, from all that tends to make them be taken notice of, and to shew these advantages ; and they endeavour on the contrary to appear not to heed them, nor to know them in themselves.

selves. And that is the modesty Civility is able to procure.

17. Civility doth not only shew these means and base vain glories, and the declared Commendations which Man gives himself; but knowing that Self-love of others is extremely subtle in discovering the by-ways which may be taken to make manifest in us what we desire to shew thereby: Civility renounces these small Crafts, and studies to avoid them. It would force us rather to speak of our selves directly and publicly, then to make use of these wicked Tricks, because Civility always fears being surpris'd therein, and knows that when men perceive them, they take a great delight to turn and make them ridiculous. Thus you see there is nothing more simple and humble then these Discourses. Civility does not Publish nor shew it self by any way, and in a word, it hath for a general rule, never to speak of it self, or if it do, 'tis with more coldness and indifferency then of others.

18. Those who have heard speak of the War maintain'd by the two chief Captains of this Age, have always been ravished with the Civility and Modesty of their Discourse. No man hath ever observed

observed, that the least word on this Subject that could be suspected of vanity hath been spoken by them. They have always been seen to do Justice to all others, but never to themselves, and one would have believed, to have heard them make a relation of some Battels wherein they have had the greatest share, both by their Conduct and Valour that even they were not there, or if they were, that it was without acting any thing. Let men read that News which came to *Paris* after the Battel of *Senof*, they will find therein that great Action half deminished. It seems that the Prince of *Conde* was but as Spectator therein. He was every where, and it appears he was hardly in any part; and never was any thing more lessen'd then what he contributed to the success of this great Combate. I think that if *St. Lewis* sent formerly relations of what he acted in *Egypt*, they were described like this. So much resemblance have Holiness and Civility in their outward deeds and tend equally to hinder that nothing that's vain may appear therein, there being only this one difference between the one and the other, that holiness is struck with the injustice of Vanity.

nity in relation to God, and Civility is concerned for its meanness in relation to men.

19. Moreover the fear which Civility hath of exciting against it self the natural aversion all men have for the vanity of another may yet have in this Conduct a more cunning and delicate sentiment of this Pride, which is born with man, and which never abandons him. These people which we see so busied with some affairs wherein they have signalized themselves that they have astonished all the World, as *Cicero* did by his Consul-ship make appear thereby that Virtue is not at all natural to them, and that they had need of great strength to hoist up their Souls to the condition wherein they are so glad to shew themselves. But there is more Grandeur not to make reflection upon their great Actions, so that they seem to escape us, and that they Spring so naturally from the Disposition of the Soul that she is not aware of them. This degree of Virtue is doubtless much more Heroick, and it is of this which human Civility, when it is at its height, endeavours, without thinking of it expressly, to give the *Idea*; or which it imitates

tates by Cunning and Policy, when it is not perfect, and proceeds rather from Reason then from Nature.

20. Who could chuse but love that well-bred man, of whom a great Wit of this Age hath made this description. Man does not pass in the World, said he, for being known in Verse, unless he hang out the Sign of a Poet, nor for an Able man in Mathematicks, without that of a Mathematician. But the true Well-bred men will have no Signs, and hardly put any difference betwixt the Profession of a Poet and that of an Ambassador. They are called neither Poets nor Geometricians, but they Judge of all those. Man does not commend it; they will speak of things which men spoke of when they entered; there is not perceived in them one quality more then another, barring a necessity of putting it in use, but when they are mixtful of it. Because it equally belongs to this Character, that we say not of them that they speak well when there is no question of the Language, and that we say of them, That they speak well when there is a question of it. 'Tis therefore a false commendation, when one saith of a man when he comes in, That he is skilful in Poetry, and 'tis an ill Sign when men have recourse to him, only because he is able to
judge

judge of some Verses. Man is full of business; he loves only those who are able to employ him in it. He is a good Mathematician, one will say, but I have nothing to do with Mathematicks. He is a man who understands War well, but I will not wage War with any one. We must therefore have a man who can adapt himself to all our Affairs.

It is impossible not to love a man thus qualified. But why do we love him? 'Tis because he seems to be made for others, and not for himself. He troubles not our Self-love by an importunate affectation, he pretends not to force us to praise him in making appear in him what we would not see. If he shews us what is good in him, 'tis for us that he shews it. Civility rendring us therefore sensible of these favourable Judgments and Opinions which it discovers in the minds of others, by this proceeding forces it self to deserve them in following it.

21. We may discover by this, wherefore the same actions may be civil in some Men, and not so in others. This happens for that they are less affected in some, and because Self-love shews it self less, and testifies less desire to apply
men

men to it. Let a man, such an one as Mr. *Vangelas*, whose profession is to study Languages, make a Book wherein he observes, both the good, and bad fashions of speaking those which are in use at Court, and those which smell of the Country, no man can find fault therein: 'Tis a man who makes it his Trade, and he may have had in that a laudable Consideration to render this Service to the publick. But if it should fall out, for example, that a Priest, or a Religious Man being angry at fine wit, would make Collections of some words which were said in the streets, and in places which he ought not to know, that he would appear full of esteem for Gallantry, and for the Conversation of Ladies, it could by no means be suffered. All the world would become Spiritual at his cost, and whether through malice, or through an opinion of Religion, would make a thousand reflections upon the disproportion of some thoughts, wherein he might busie himself, from the Holiness of his Office and his Profession. Insomuch that when men take delight in his Book, either because there would be something that's good therein, or because there would be some body who might
be

best dealt withall, which is always agreeable, they esteeme the person of the Author less, and find themselves disposed to choose him either for Friend or Counsellor.

22. It is needless to prove that Charity is yet more removed from affectation, than meer Civility. For loving others but not it self, it hath nothing to do but to follow its natural motions, to act with a perfect Civility. It does it so much better, by how much it does it more sincerely, and that there is nothing of counterfeit in it. Whereas this civility of Self-love is for the most part not so uniform. If civility repress it in one part, Self-love shews it self sometimes in another, and so leaves some little disgust of it self, to those who observe it narrowly. But as that happens but against its intention, it is ashamed being aware of it, or rather perceiving that others did observe it.

Thus it is always true to say, that when Self-love follows reason exactly in the search of esteem, and affection of Men, it imitates perfectly Charity, so that in consulting it upon exterior actions it makes us the same answer that Charity does, and engages us in the same ways.

23. If for example, one ask Charity, in what disposition we ought to be concerning the subject of our Faults, she will tell us that we ought extreemly to contemn our selves as to our own understanding, in regard of those we think we have not ; and that the perswasion wherein we ought to be in general of our blindness in this Point, ought to dispose us more to believe others in this than our selves ; But in respect of faults which we shall be convinced of, there would be nothing more unjust than to counterfeit, and destroy in some sort the Light of God it self, by pretending to justify what it condemns; and thus the least we can do to escape this pride so criminal, is to acknowledge them sincerely, and to humble our selves before God and Man.

24. Let us now propose the same question to Self-love, and we shall see if it speak not the same language at the bottom of the Heart, it gives yet the same counsel. Tho it be hard, it will say, to acknowledge our faults, and desire to deface them, and blot them out of the memory of Man, as well as out of our own, it is evident nevertheless that that is impossible. The more we shall strive to disguise them from others,

thers, the more ingenuous they will be to discover them, and wicked to make them taken notice of. This same desire of Concealing them will pass in their minds for the greatest of faults, and we shall do nothing in striving either to dissemble them or to maintain them, but draw hatred and disdain upon our selves. We must therefore necessarily steer another course. If we cannot have the glory of being without faults, we must have that of knowing them, and not being cheats to our selves. *Bellum est sua vitia nosse,* Let us take away then from others the pleasure of taking notice of them, in observing them our selves first, and thereby disarming their wickedness.

'Tis upon the like considerations that Civility forms its conduct, and 'tis that which carries it to make an open profession of acknowledging sincerely all its Faults, and not to take it ill that others observe them, and by this means it gains the reputation of an amiable equity, which makes it judge of it self clearly, and without passion, which knows how to justify it self, and with which one may be at quiet, without being obliged outwardly to testify that one approves, what indeed one approves not.

25. It is easie to be discerned by what has been said, that Charity and Self-love should be very conform as to the receiving reprehensions and advertisements, and that some very different consideration, and motives ought to unite them in the same outward conduct. We know well enough that to which Charity sways us; For looking upon these Advertisements, as a very great good, and a favourable means to deliver us from our Faults, Charity receives them not only with joy, but with greediness and avidity. The bitterness it self which accompanies them is agreeable to it, as procuring as the satisfaction of humility; and weakening Self-love, which Charity esteems as its worst enemy. Thus 'tis so far from showing any disgust or sharpness of speech to those who procure us this good, that it forgets nothing that may testify its gratefulness; to comfort them in the fear they have of hurting us, to incline them, to do us sometimes the same favour, and to free them from all doubts which may make them reserved, and keep them in torment and constraint.

26. In truth Self-love is always invariably, very far removed from this disposition.

on. It loves not that others take notice of our Faults; and much less that they admonish us of them. But yet it acts outwardly as Charity does. For learning by these admonitions which are given us, the bad impression Men have of us, reason makes Self-love conclude presently, that it must be lessen'd, or at least not augmented; and consulting afterwards other mens minds to learn how we ought to guide ours, Self-love easily acknowledgeth that nothing is a greater stumbling-block than the haughtiness of those, who are not able to endure to be admonish'd of any of their Faults, who rebel against Truth, and who could wish that all the World were blind in respect of them, or would suppress their thoughts, so soon as they are not for their advantage; and on the contrary nothing is more agreeable to People than to be freed from this resistance, and to see that they put a stop to their judgments, and to their light, and thus in some sort they submit themselves to their empire. Self-love therefore without hesitating takes this last part, and thereby makes us insinuate ourselves so agreeably into the hearts of those who reprove us, that they love

those who humble themselves in that manner much better, what faults soever they have, than those who having none, have not opportunity to give them this satisfaction. Because we must observe that our faults are not of themselves contrary to the Self-love of others, and likewise that the bravest qualities of themselves, are not pleasing to it. 'Tis the relation these faults, and these brave qualities have with them. So that if these faults make us more humble in respect of them, or if these brave qualities render us more haughty, they will love us with these faults, and hate us with all those brave qualities.

27. It is manifest that this conduct aims directly at least at Self-love, which is to obtain the esteem of the friendship of men. And therefore Human civility never fails to follow it, and often even does it more exactly than true Piety, when it is not perfect. Because as Charity is less active than Self-love, it happens often also that Pious people appear more sensible, and more delicate than civil wordly Men, when advertised of their faults, which are observed in their Conduct, or in their labours, because in these occurrences, not having

a very lively Charity, they lack also this Self-love which is a supplement in regard of outward actions.

28. The conduct which Charity observes towards civil Men, when we are prepossessed with unjust suspicions, and unreasonable Impressions of them, is not to reprove them, and shew discontent and malice, but to justify them in testifying that they are not astonished that being Men, they are suspected of human frailties, and in a word not to complain of these suspicions, but to labour to cure them; because we ought to look upon them as very dangerous for those who have them, and that the way to free them from them, is not to reprove them when they are not persuaded that they are in the wrong, but to shew them gently the falsity of their suspicions to oblige them, by this means to condemn them their own selves.

29. In truth if we follow on these occasions, the first motives of Self-love, we shall be very far from this moderation. They will be on the contrary only passions full of resentments and bitterness. But if we consult Reason, with a resolution to follow it to arrive at last

at last at what we ought, which is to blot out these suspicions, which are so injurious, and to stablish our reputation in the minds of those who have received them, it is necessary that we take the same way. Because all that seems passion and trouble of the mind, is only capable to increase the bad Impressions men have harboured of us. And whereas ~~offensive~~ there is only the mind which is prepossessed therewith, we by bitterness carry it into the will it self, and make it endeavour to maintain the Impressions of the mind. If thus Self-love foreseeing this evil effect, is redoted, how unwilling soever it may be, to imitate this sweet and moderate conduct which Charity prescribes.

30. Who would ever believe that Self-love, even when it should have intention to cry down its enemies, to render them odious, and to make them condemn'd by all the world of baseness, and injustice, could not do better to prosper therein, then to follow the steps of Charity? Yet this happens very often. For there is nothing for the most part, which makes base and uncivil proceedings which are used towards us, appear better, than to withstand those by a process

ness full of civility and moderation. This opposition, which shews the difference of these two contrary conducts, makes the one and the other more apparent. Civility appears more lovely on the one side, and baseness more shameful on the other. And in this manner Self-love hath all it pretends, which is, that we raise our selves, and humble those who have offended us.

31. I remember upon this Subject, that when a certain Book was published, in which the Author pretended to have gathered together divers and sundry faults against the Language, which he thought he had found in some works of Piety, which passed for well written, it was examined in a Society by a way of discourse, what those who were concerned therein ought to do on this score; Each man agreed presently that the remarks of this Author being inconsiderable, ought not to be proposed against the same Writings, because there was no other end in it, but that of acquiring the reputation of Writing well; those whom it attacked, ought not to have the least thought of forming a contest upon so frivolous an occasion; how much to blame forever this Author might be in

some of his Remarks. But when we came to speak of what they ought to do, we were not of the same mind. There were some who would maintain, that they ought not to affirm that they had seen this Book. But the Generality believed that they ought to take other measures, and that for full answer, they need only correct honestly and faithfully in the other Editions of those Books, all that this Author had disallowed therein with any gloss of Justice. The reason which they alledge for it: besides the general motive of honouring Truth in every thing, is, that there was no better way, whereby the Publick can do this Author, and those whom it should have attacked, Justice, than by using them so moderately. I confess that I was of this opinion, and that I thought there was none more conform, neither to Charity, which always tends to humble us, nor to Self-love, which is glad to place in sight the faults of those who have a desire to abase us. I will also praise it very willingly, if I have occasion to do it, without any pretence whatsoever, of obliging any one to believe that it is an act of humility, being I acknowledge that it may very easily have another principle. 32. 'Tis

22. 'Tis thus that Charity and Civility accord together to make appear outwardly the same Sentiment, in what regards our good and bad qualities; and it is not hard to judge thereby that they do the same in what regards others. We see easily whereto Charity inclines, in respect of the good it observes in others. As Charity rejoices at it inwardly, it testifies also its joy outwardly all manner of ways possible; and far from endeavouring to observe it, Charity useth its power to heighten it and make it esteemed. Other mens good is its proper good, through the love it bears them, and it stops there more cheerfully, than at its own, because it fears not therein complacency and vanity.

23. It would seem at first that there could be no reason to hope the like conduct from Self-love. For it is so far from having this goodness and kindness for others; that on the contrary it is naturally wicked, jealous, envious, full of gall and venom. All that puffs up others incommodes, and vexes it; and one hardly sees it really favourable to the praises given them, except some profit may be drawn from thence, and that they make use of it as a step to raise themselves. . . . But

But although one perceive in himself all these motives, nevertheless when one considers the effect they would make upon the minds of others, if one should shew them publickly, one would immediately conclude to keep them secret. We see clearly that that would be the way to make ones self lookt upon as a common and publick Enemy, and would thereby become the Object of hatred, and the abomination of all the World. We should not only be odious to those against whom we would exercise our wickedness, but even to those we would spare, no body being able to assure himself to receive Justice from people in whom this evil Platform is found, and every one fearing, with reason, to become the object of their Jealousie. Civility makes us therefore take justly the contrary way. It makes us affect to shew outwardly an extream equity to praise voluntarily what is Praise-worthy, to set a value as great as we can on other mens good qualities, and not to refuse even to our Enemies our Testimonies of esteem which they deserve; and by this means we prosper in the Design of making our selves beloved, we acquire friends, we pacifie our Enemies, and we keep.

keep a good Correspondence with all the World.

34. 'Tis by these considerations that Civility doth manifest an extream Indulgence for other mens faults, and far from exaggerating or divulging them, doth hide and excuse them as much as it can; never contemns any man, explicates all to the best, is easily satisfied, and affects not to be curious and subtil in discovering peoples faults who are generally esteem'd, avoids rash and ill-grounded suspicions, and had rather, in some sort, be deceived, then give way to suspicions which are hurtful to its Neighbour. All this tends directly, at least to self-love. For as we cannot be ignorant but that we have faults, we hate much more those whom we judge will Scorn us when they shall perceive them, and we cannot on the contrary but love those from whom we hope for some support, condescendence and favour.

35. If Charity be patient in Injuries, because it endeavours to assuage the sharpness of those who hurt us, it does it that we may suffer all sorts of bad usage joyfully, to satisfie Gods Justice, and perswades us that we deserve yet worse. Self-love hath also a Patience of Inter-
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est and Vanity which outwardly produceth the same effects. It hinders us for passing for proud and presumptuous. It teaches us, That 'tis good not to vex or provoke people too much, and thereupon makes us dissemble the Injuries which we receive.

If Charity be kind through a sincere desire of serving others, Self-love will also that we be so, to rule thereby in their minds, and to enjoy the inclinations which these good Turns excite therein.

If Charity endeavour to conceal itself when it does good to others, that it may not attribute any thing to itself, Self-love does as much to enjoy it more fully, because we hold our selves so much more obliged, by how much more he who does a good turn does it privately.

If Charity extend its good turns to those from whom nothing is expected, and even to Enemies, as regarding nothing but their good, and not its own interest: Self-love does the same, as knowing by how much more good turns do appear disinterested and free from all self-seeking; by so much more they obtain a general affection by a hope they give

give to all the world of receiving the like.

If Charity be thankful towards the world, because its Gratitude towards God diffuseth it self over all the instruments which it makes use of to procure us happiness: Self-love makes us earnestly desire to be so, for fear of disturbing the happiness of others who expect it, and is troubled when it fails therein.

Lastly, if Charity makes us faithful towards all the World through a sincere love of Justice, Self-love makes us practice the same Fidelity to obtain mens assurance.

36. Charity, as the Apostle saith, is not ambitious, because those who are so, have but little esteem for human Honours and temporal Greatness which Ambition seeks; because they fear them more then they desire them, and find themselves alway happy in the condition wherein God hath placed them. We cannot say so much of human Civility, and if we will judge of it by its *Basis* or Ground-work, this Civility is not only subject to Ambition, but is indeed nothing else but a curious and delicate Ambition, and yet endeavours outwardly to imitate Charity. For it knows so well
how

how to conceal its ambitious desires, for fear of meeting with opposition in the self-love of others, which is always on its Guard on that side, that one would say, it had not any pretence, that it had only a care for others, and that it had absolutely forgot it self. If it think of raising it self, 'tis without trouble and meanness, and it does it so well as if Fortune seem'd always to come and find it. It self, without being able to make any retreat or any advance to obtain it.

§ 7. There are some likewise which self-love pushes further, and to whom it gives an effective separation from great Fortunes and great Employes, tho possibly they might arrive thereunto. The satisfaction of a sweet and quiet life, in which we entertain a great quantity of brave Friendships, and render service to many persons of quality and worth without Interest or Dependence in contenting our selves to have got in the world the reputation of a Civil, Obliging, Disinterested Man, and a good Friend. This life, I say, hath Charms which are able to make it preferred before all the greatness in the World, through a wise and discreet Self-love, and which knows how to compare the
advan-

advantages and disadvantages of divers States. This is one *Idea* which *Pompeius Atticus* proposed to himself, and which he followed so happily that being found amongst many dissenting Parties, who in his time tore in peices the Republick of *Rome*, he was always friend to all, and served them without displeasing any. We see yet that there are of *Atticus's* followers or imitators, and it may be said to their advantage, that if it were permitted or possible to be happy in this life, they would have found out the secret of it, and that their choice is infinitely wiser than that of others, who being always desirous to raise themselves by a boundless ambition, do thereby deprive themselves of two principal goods of life, which are Security and Repose.

§8. Likewise it is safe to say, that as Charity separates us from the pleasures of the senses, because it keeps the Soul in order, and permits it to cleave to God only; Civility ought to do the same, because the subjection to Corporal pleasures hath always something of mean and contemptible, which debases and disfigures the *Idea* of us, which self-love desires to imprint in the minds of others.

others. We have also reason to be distrustful of those who are governed by their Passions and Pleasures, and to fear from them all sort of basenesses and injuries. For what assurance can one have that their Passion will not oversway them when it shall be contrary to their duty towards men, being we see it sways them so often in what is their Duty to God.

Thus Civility, which will above all conserve the reputation of an inviolable Fidelity, and of an inflexible firmness in duties, affects to appear free from this Passion for Pleasures, which gives so just an occasion of distrust.

39. Lastly, not to urge this conformity of Charity and Self-love to a troublesome rehearsal, I shall content my self to add what I have said of it, that it is very true that Self-love may imitate all the Actions of Charity, and insinuate it self often into those wherein it seems it may have the least share, and which are design'd to mortifie and to destroy it.

It can sometimes make religious persons Fast, or at least assuage one part of the trouble of their Fast. The hair Cloaths and Discipline are sometimes for their use, and there is hardly any humili-

humiliation which Self-love is not capable to practice ; and although it find not its accompt in solitude, in silence, and in secret Austerities, there are perchance certain hidden passages and certain subterraneous ways, through which it might (may be) find some entrance. In fine self-love is also capable to make us suffer even death with joy ; and to the end that there may be no certain way to distinguish it from Charity by Martyrdoms, the Saints do teach us after St. Paul, that there are Martyrs of Vanity as well as of Charity. Therefore St. Austin having said, *That Vanity doth imitate so exactly the works of Charity, that there is almost no difference at all betwixt their effects, that Charity doth nourish the Poor, and that Vanity doth so likewise; that Charity Fasteth, that Vanity can Fast also; that these works do strike us, but that we cannot distinguish which come from a good and which from an ill Principle.* He adds at last that Charity dyes, and brings us at the end to Martyrdom, and that Vanity dyes also and suffereth Martyrdom. *Videte qualia opera faciat Superbia, quam similia faciat & prope paria Charitati. Pascit Esurientem Charitas, Pascit & Superbia, Charitas ut Deus laudetur, Superbia ut ipsa laudetur.* *Jejunat*

*juvat Charitas, jejuna Superbia. Opera
videmus, in operibus tamen discernimus. Glo-
riatur Charitas, Moratur Superbia.*

40. But there is this difference betwixt the hard, troublesome and humbling actions of Vertue, and those which have nothing but what is beautifull without being troublesome, that when Self-love perswades Men to humility, patience, and to suffering, 'tis by a kind of unseasonableness or disorder. For it is evident, for example, that the way to attain to our end, which we propose, is not to shut our selves up in solitude to have no converse with Men, or to have nothing spoken of but our sins and faults. And thus it is almost impossible that there be any who embrace this kind of life so contrary to the inclinations of Nature, and who persevere therein by other motives, than those of Salvation. But it is not the same with the most part of the actions of Vertue, which may be done in the world. Self-love obtains its ends better by practising them. It cannot omit them without losing what it aims at: And it must be carried away by some unreasonable passion against its true Interests, to follow any other road but this.

14. Thus.

41. Thus one may say truly, that absolutely to reform the World, that's to say to banish all the Vices, and all the gross disorders therein, and to make Mankind happy even in this life, there needs only instead of Charity, to give everyone a harmless Self-love, which may be able to discern its true Interests, and to incline thereto by the ways which true Reason shall discover to it. How corrupt soever this whole Society may be within, and in the sight of God, there would be nothing without better ordered, more civilly, more just, more peaceable, more honest, more generous, and what would be more admirable, 'tis that not being animated and stir'd but by Self-love, Self-love would not appear at all there, and being absolutely void of Charity, we should see every where nothing but the form and character of Charity.

42. Perhaps it would not be amiss, that those who are charged with the Education of great Persons, should have this engraven in their minds, to the end that if they should not be able to inspire them with the sentiment of Charity, which they would gladly do, they should endeavour at least to form their
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Self-love, and teach them how the most part of the ways which they take to content this Self-love are false, ill understood, and contrary to their true Interests, and how it would be facile for them to take some others, which would conduct them without trouble to honour and glory, and would get them the affection, the esteem, and the admiration of all the World. If they should not prosper by this means to render them usefull to themselves, they would at least make them usefull for others, and would put them in a way which would always be less remote from the way to Heaven, than that which they take, seeing that it would be only to change the end, and the intention, to render themselves as agreeable to God by a truly Christian vertue, as they would be to Man by the splendor of this human Civility to which we would form them.

43. But it would be of little or no moment that these two Principles so different, the one whereof bears the fruits of Life, the other of Death, should be confounded in the outward Actions, at least if it were easie for every one to know distinctly that which makes him

him do it, to the end that he may be able to judge thereby of his actions and condition. What is more strange, is, that many times this mixture and this confusion begins in the heart it self, so that we cannot distinguish whether 'tis through Charity or Self-love that we act, whether 'tis God or our selves we seek for, whether 'tis for Heaven or Hell we labour. This obscurity proceeds from divers causes; and I will take notice here of the three principall ones.

44. The first is that these considerations of the judgments of men, and the motions of their hearts in regard of us which are the rule, the source, and the object of human Civility, are not always accompanied with formal and expresse reflections, and that the motions which they produce are yet more imperceptible to us. These are often in respect of the mind, only as certain looks, and certain transitory thoughts by which it is carried, as by stealth towards these judgments, which are made of us, and in respect of the heart only as certain hidden Propensities, which stop it gently on this side; so that we do not make any expresse reflection

fiction neither on this propensity, nor on the thoughts which produceth it, although that may be the thing which gives the motion to our outward Actions; and which is the Principle thereof.

45. The second is that it may often happen, that even when we are not removed in effect but through fear of displeasing men, or through a desire to please them. We have not absolutely any knowledge, nor any distinct thoughts, neither of the one nor the other; and that because we act often without a distinct knowledge, and by a simple custom, which is not guided, unless by confused thoughts, being forced to look upon certain actions, as able to bring upon us publick infamy, and the hatred of honest men; it forms it self in the mind a confused Idea thereof, which represents them to us as hatefull and odious, without troubling the mind why. And this Idea sufficeth to stir up in the heart a motion of horror, aversion and separation. Now the confused Ideas, and these motions which follow them, come so near to the true considerations of Charity, which make it hate the evil actions which they include, that there

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is hardly any but God who can discern the difference betwixt them.

46. The third is, that even when we have Charity in the heart, and that it carries us to objects which are proper for it, nevertheless because cupidity marcheth many times the same ways, and tends to the same objects, tho by different motives, it makes a Hotch-potch in the Mind, and in the heart of these two considerations and motions, without our knowing certainly which it is that carries it, and which is the true principle of our Actions. We seek God and the World at once; the heart is very glad to please the one and the other, and knows, not whether 'tis God he relates to the World, or the World to God. This difference cannot be discovered, but by penetrating a certain Groundplot which is in the heart, and which is not evidently known but by God alone.

47. Behold what is the ordinary condition of Men in this life, even when they love God. Self-love acts more grossly in some than others, but it lives and acts in all to such a degree, and it is seldom that they are able to assure themselves of any one action in particular,

lar, that it is exempt from all self-inquiring. But tho this state and condition may be for them a great cause of grief and fear, they may be able nevertheless to find therein some Consolation, if they dive into the reasons for which God permits them to remain there, and raises not them to a higher degree of Vertue.

48. It is visible in the first place that the design which God hath to conceal the Kingdom of Heaven, which he came to establish upon Earth, requires that men of Honesty and uprightness be intermixt outwardly with wicked men, and that they be not distinguished from them by clear and visible marks. For if the faithfull, whom he animates by his Spirit, and in whom he resides as in his Temple, were a certain kind of men, separated from others, and as a Nation apart which the World might distinguish by actions which could not be met with in others, they would all be publick, continual and subsisting miracles, which would destroy the state of Faith, by which God will save the World. The wicked who would see themselves in an impossibility of imitating them, would thereby clearly know, that Nature cannot

not attain to the state of virtuous Men. Therefore there must be some actions purely Human, which do so much resemble supernatural and divine Actions, that the distinction cannot be perceived. And as these well-meaning men do not commit any crimes, and thus cannot be thereby intermixed together with the wicked; It must necessarily follow, that the wicked can imitate their virtuous Actions, and do some which may be so like outwardly, that they cannot be discovered from the others.

49. But it is not only an effect of Gods Justice to withdraw from the sight of wicked men the treasures of Grace, which he gives to the Just. This is one of his Mercies also towards the Just themselves. It is good for them not to know themselves, nor to see their own proper Justice. The sight would be capable to overwhelm them. Man is so weak and feeble even in his force, that he is not able to undergo the weight of it. And by a strange disorder which hath its source in the corruption of the Heart, altho its happiness consists in the possession of Vertue, and its misfortune in being full of faults, it is there-

fore more dangerous for him to know his vertues than his faults. The knowledge of humility renders him proud, and that of his pride humble. He is strong and powerfull when he knows himself weak, and weak when he thinks he is strong. Thus this obscurity which impedes and hinders him from distinguishing clearly whether he acts by Charity, or by Self-love, is so far from hurting, that 'tis comfortable to him. This obscurity does not take away Vertues from him, but hinders him from loosing them, by keeping him always in humility and fear, and making him mistrust all his Works, and to rely only on Gods Mercy.

50. This is the great profit of this outward resemblance of the actions of Self-love, with those of Charity. But we may yet take notice of some others which are very material. It happens oftentimes that Charity is weak in certain Souls, and in this condition of weakness Charity would be easily extirpated by these violent tentations, if God did not permit that these tentations were not enervated, and as it were counterpoised by certain human motives, which stop the violence of it, and give
means

means to the Soul to follow the instinct of Grace. The fear of mens judgments is one of these motives, and there is hardly any of them which make more impression upon the Mind. Fear alone is not sufficient for Charity to surmount temptations in a Christian way, seeing that this fear springs only from vanity, but it suspends their force, and if it be found that the Soul hath some spark of true Charity, it puts her in a condition of following it ; and therefore we see that the Holy Legislators of Religious Orders have not been negligent in these human means, and that they have fixed to certain faults, penances, which were dreadful before men, to the end that the fear of this Human confusion may render the Religious more diligent in avoiding them. 'Tis not that they would pretend to make them do them by this sole motive, but their intention hath been, that they should make use thereof to fortifie themselves against negligence, and that this Human fear might serve as arms to Charity, the better by this means to resist the inclination of Nature.

51. It is not then unprofitable for Men in the state of weakness, wherein

they are to be far removed from vices, not only by Charity, but also by this kind of Self-love which is called Civility, to the end that in the feebleness of charity Civility may be able to uphold the Mind, and hinder it from falling into dangerous excesses. And 'tis this which makes us see often strange Revolutions in those, who being little sensible of mens judgments, and not thinking of pleasing or displeasing them are sometimes touched with some small motions of Piety. Because when it happens that they want these motions, not having then curb enough to stop them, they let themselves be hurried away to all sorts of Extravagancies. Thus when one relies upon Men, it is good to consider if besides Conscience which keeps them from evil, they have yet a certain Civility, which makes them apprehend doing things which may be condemned by wise and prudent Persons, there being hardly any spirits more dangerous, than those who are capable of maintaining an unreasonable and extravagant conduct against the Publick Judgment, and of placing themselves without reason above the reproach of those who know them.

52. Is it not a great and considerable advantage to Civil men to be able to conceal themselves from men by the means of this obscurity which hinders one from discerning true Piety, from Self-love, and which makes actions of Charity pass in the mind of the World for the effects of pure Civility? For how dangerous would it be for them, if all their good actions were taken notice of, and that they were recompenced for them out of hand by praises which they would bring them? It would be the means to oblige them to separate themselves entirely from the society of Men; whereas by the favour of this confusion they have some more liberty to treat with the World, to follow on all occasions the motions of their Charity, in hopes that they will be taken only as simple and meer Civilities. In a word one may say, that as Civility is very glad to pass for Charity, and that it doth all it can to borrow its form and shape, and its characters; Charity on the contrary is glad that it may be taken for Civility, and altho it does not contribute directly to establish this Impression, yet it does nothing to destroy it, as well because it knows not abso-

lutely that it is not something of it, as because that it is advantageous to Self-love that we believe it.

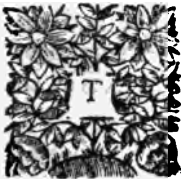
53. Lastly, is not this a motive powerful enough to stir us up to the practice of Virtues, to say to ones self, *I should be very unfortunate to wander and stray out of the way whereto Charity and Self-interest equally inclines me, and to render myself, in forsaking them, equally odious to God and man.* Is not this a means to praise God, that he hath been pleased to forbid us the most part of Disorders, as contrary to the good of men even in this life, and ought to be avoided for the same motive of human interest? In fine is not this a means to understand better the strange corruption of nature and the violence of our passions, to see that they make us forget not only what we owe to God, but also what we owe to our selves, and render us unfortunate both in this World and in the other? Because if there be less glory and merit in serving God, when it is for our Interest, there is, without doubt, more disorder and confusion not to serve him, when we deprive our selves at the same time of what Interest it self causeth us to desire, and diligently to seek for, as being our own proper advantage. THE



The Third Treatise.

*Of the several means by which God
is Tempted.*

1.



Here are certain Duties which all Christians know to a certain degree, and which are very much unknown to them beyond this degree, which happens ordinarily, that not penetrating into the true Principles of them, they are not able to comprehend their extent. The prohibition that God hath made us of Tempting him is properly of this kind. Few persons are ignorant that God thereby orders us not to be idle when we have in our power human means which we can employ. But as we know not

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why

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why God forbids us to neglect these human means, we rest there, and we heed by so much the less to instruct our selves in this Précept, by how much it seems that there is nothing more rare than to tempt God in this manner; human understanding being infinitely more inclin'd to fix it self too much to human means, through a want of Confidence in God, than to neglect them through an Excess of Trust. 'Tis this which gives a belief that it would not be unprofitable to explicate at large what it is to tempt God, and to declare the Grounds and Principles of the Prohibition which God makes us thereof.

2. God is not only Sovereignly powerful, he is also Sovereignly Wise in his Conduct. As being powerful he is the chief Original of all things, whether in the corporeal and visible World, or in the invisible or Spiritual World. As being wise he operates all things by certain means, and in a certain order, which is not less essential to his Providence than the Power it self by which he operates them.

3. The pride and disorder of Men tend equally to withdraw them from the Power

Power and Wisdom of God; as solid Piety tends to humble them more and more to the one and the other. To withdraw themselves from this Power, some have denied absolutely the Providence, and the Operation of God, even in natural things, like the *Epicureans*. Others have denied it in Spiritual things, and in the actions of our Souls, which lead us to Eternal Happiness or misery, like the *Pelagians*. And others not daring to go to this excess of Impiety, have not stuck to deny it him in the distinction of good Men and bad, in the Elect and Reprobate, like the *Semipelagians*.

4. But the manner how Men withdraw themselves from the Wisdom of God, being no less criminal, is much more unknown. And 'tis this which they call tempting of God which is a sin few people comprehend.

It depends in the withdrawing themselves from the order of God, and pretending to make it act according to our phantasie, in neglecting the consequence of the means, to which he fixeth ordinarily the effects of his Divine Power. And to conceive in what manner we fall thereinto, as to what regards the

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the life of the Soul, 'tis but to consider how we may fall thereinto, as to what regards the life of the body.

5. It is manifest, that 'tis God who maintains our being and our Life; and that he is not less properly the cause thereof, than if he made it subsist by a visible Miracle, independant of all exterior means. We maintain it by food. But who is it that produceth this food? *It was not, saith St. Augustin, neither my Mother, nor my Nurses, who replenished their breasts for me with milk which they gave me, but it was thee, O Lord: It was only thee, who gave me by their help the nourishment I had need of according to the natural Order which thou hast established; and according to the riches of thy Bounty and Providence, who diffused thy Cares even into the most secret Principles, and the most hidden causes of the substance of thy Creatures. Thou art the Author of all Good; O my God, and I owe thee all the Conservation of my life.*

6. Whether he make us live after this manner, or after an extraordinary and miraculous manner, 'tis always he who acts and maintains us. And thus we are obliged to acknowledge his All-powerfull Hand and Operation, whether he

he conceal or disclose it. But yet there is this difference betwixt these two ways, whereby he acts upon the Souls and bodies. That the first is the common way by which he guides his Creatures, and the other an extraordinary way whereof he seldom makes use, and which hath no certain rules. 'Tis in the first that the order of Providence, which he permits men to know, consists; and the second includes only certain effects and causes which of our selves we can never foresee, because the counsels according to which God produceth them at one time, and does not produce them at another, are too sublime for the wit of man.

7. His Wisdom being therefore debased to hide ordinarily his divine Operation by human means, it is just that men should humble themselves by these means, and it is a great pride in them to neglect them, and to pretend to constrain God to act in an extraordinary manner, of which he hath not made us capable of penetrating to the bottom. 'Tis this which is properly called tempting God, as Jesus Christ teacheth us in the Gospel. For the Devil urging him to cast himself from the top of the Temple

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ple to the bottom, in alledging to him that 'tis written; that God hath commanded his Angels to uphold the Just, and so hinder them from hurting themselves against the stones, Jesus Christ resisted him, telling him, that 'tis written, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, supposing that it would be tempting God, to pretend that he ought to cause his Angels to uphold a Just Man, who should expose himself rashly to this danger in leaving the common way which consists in avoiding it.

8. St. *Austin* grounded this
Aug. 1. Maxim of Christian Morality
22. contr. upon the Example of Jesus
Fauf. c. 36 Christ and St. *Paul*; "Holy
 " Doctrine teacheth us, saith he, that
 " when we are able to employ these hu-
 " man means, 'tis to tempt God to neg-
 " lect them; the Redeemer wanted not
 " power to secure his Disciples by mi-
 " racles, and yet he ordered them that
 " if they were persecuted in one City,
 " to flee to another, and he hath been
 " willing also to shew them the exam-
 " ple of this Conduct in his own Person.
 " For altho he was Master absolutely of
 " his life, and that no man could take it
 " away without his consent, he hath not
 " omitted

"omitted in his Infancy to flee death by
 "flight, in causing his Parents to carry
 "him into Egypt. The Gospel also ob-
 "serves that once he would not go pub-
 "lickly to the Feast of Easter, altho-
 "at other times he had spoken to the
 "Jews without hiding himself, even
 "when they were the most in wrath a-
 "gainst him, and heard what he said
 "to them with more hatred, because
 "they were not able to lay hands upon
 "him, his time not being come. 'Tis
 "not that that time could force him to
 "die, but 'tis because he had chosen it
 "willingly to suffer the Jews to take a-
 "way his life. Thus he hath shewn the
 "power of a God, when instructing and
 "reproving his enemies publicly, he did
 "not permit their rage to have any
 "power over him; but in flying and
 "hiding himself he hath instructed the
 "weakness of Man not to tempt God
 "in neglecting to do what he was able
 "to guard himself from the mischiefs
 "which he ought to avoid. The A-
 "postle St. Paul did not despair of
 "Gods Help, nor had not lost Faith,
 "when he caused himself to be let
 "down in a Basket from the top of the
 "walls of Damascus, to free himself from
 "fal-

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“falling into the hands of his enemies,
 “and his flight did not denote that his
 “Faith was void, but only that he would
 “not tempt God, as he should have
 “done, in omitting this means of saving
 “himself.

9. 'Tis yet by the same Principles;
 and by the same examples that this Ho-
 ly Doctor doth confute; in the Book he
 writ of the *Labour of Religions*, the vain
 imaginations of certain *African Monks*
 who would not labour, because it is
 said in the Gospel, *that God doth nourish*
the fowls of the air, altho they neither sow
nor reap, in establishing against them
 this admirable Rule which forbids men
 to tempt God, and at the same time
 teaches them not to be less unmindfull
 of him, when he nourishes them by their
 labour, then if he procured them their
 food without contributing to it at all on
 their part. “If there happen, saith he,
 “to us infirmities and troubles, which
 “hinder us from labouring, we ought
 “to hope that God will feed us as he
 “doth the fowls in the air, and clothe
 “us as he clothes the Lillies, neither
 “the fowls nor lillies contributing any
 “any thing thereunto. But being in a
 “condition to labour, we ought not to
 “tempt

“tempt God by neglecting to do it;
“being the power of doing it is a gift
“of God, so that in procuring by this
“means what is necessary to keep us a-
“live; ’tis alwas from God we receive
“it, because ’tis from him we receive
“the power of labouring for our li-
“ving.

10. Thus it would be to tempt God to refuse what is necessary to keep us alive, under pretence that God can keep us alive without the help of food. A Governour would tempt God if he should not make preparation to defend the place he hath Command of, against the enemy; under pretence that it is written; *If God defend not the City, the Guard watcheth in vain.* For altho he can conserve it in effect, as he did *Jerusalem* again the Army of *Sennacherib*; yet the ordinary way whereby he saved the Cities, was to inspire the Captains with vigilance, and the Souldiers with courage. And generally it may be said, that all dull and lazy People in some sort tempt God; because they neglect the means by which Gods Grace and Assistance is obtained.

11. Nor is there any but God who knows all the reasons why he conceals
his

his operations under certain causes, which appear all Natural. We know only some of them. By this means he withdraws men from idleness, he obliges them to vigilance and labour, he employs and exercises them, he punishes them by these painfull and laborious employments, he makes them set a great value on those things which cost them most pains. But it may be said that one of his principal designs, is, to hide himself, and to make his conduct unknown to those who are unworthy to know it.

12. If he did always act after a miraculous manner, we should be as it were forced to acknowledge him in every thing, and this evidence would not be conform neither to his Justice nor Mercy: He is by his Justice to suffer the wicked to continue in the dark, which inclines and makes them doubt of his Providence, and of his Being, and he is by his Mercy to keep his Chosen privately from vanity by this wholesome obscurity.

The life of Faith which is the life of the Just in this world, consisting then in serving God without seeing him in a sensible manner, it is evident that

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continual miracles would destroy this state absolutely.

Thus it is necessary that God act on one part, and on the other that we do not know his action sensibly, he must hide himself under a certain means, which would appear as it were natural; and which being always exposed to view, should not stir up their admiration, that it might only be discovered by those whose eyes he should open by a Light which he gives to whom he shall think fit.

13. But if it were necessary that God should conceal himself in this manner in the Order of Nature, and in the outward effects he produceth on the body, it were not less necessary that he should conceal himself in his inward Operations upon the Soul; because the evidence of the Divine Operation in these kind of actions, withdraws not the Soul less from the state of Faith, by which he desires that she should work out her Salvation, in this life. And therefore he gives not ordinarily his greatest Graces, but by a consequent of means which appear quite Human and ordinary, and which seem humanly proportioned to the end for which they are ordained.

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He wills us to desire Vertues, to labour to acquire them, to seek out means to practise them, to separate our selves from things which may carry us to sin. 'Tis he who breathes these desires into us, who operates in us these labours and pains, and who makes us lop off these impediments. It would be facile for him to give us Vertue without this consequent means, but in giving them us in this order, and by these means he hides himself from us, and conserves us in humility.

14. In the same manner he might advertise us every moment what we have to do; but if he did in this manner it would be a Conduct visibly miraculous. He wills us then that we foresee our actions and our words, that we consider them before him, that we may govern them according to his Laws; and that we may employ all the care we possibly can to acknowledge what he wills us, and requires of us in each rencounter. He himself is the Author of these preparations, of this Enquiry, of this Care; and he makes use of them, as an ordinary means to communicate to us the Wisdom which we have need of for our Conduct.

15. 'Tis

15. 'Tis true that Jesus Christ said to his Disciples, that they ought not to be troubled for what they shall say to Kings and Princes when they shall force them to appear before them, because it shall be given to them even at the hour itself what they ought to answer them. But Jesus Christ's design in this admonition was only to exclude the foreseeings and the reflections of despair and Self-love: And he would rather dispose them not to be astonished, when they are obliged to speak to Kings, being unprepared, then to forbid them to prepare themselves for it. Likewise when Jesus Christ forbade his Disciples to be troubled at the want of food and clothes, he did not forbid them according to the Fathers, reasonable care and precautions, nor obliged them to expect that God should procure them the one and the other by extraordinary ways; he only commanded them to banish inquietudes and distrusts from their hearts, which are hurtfull to his Providence, and to his Bounty and Goodness, which hinder them from seeking the Kingdom of God before all other things.

16. Thus there be often apparent contrarieties in Christian Truths, when
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we only look upon them with a superficial sight which disappears and vanisheth, when penetrated to the bottom.

We may believe, for example, to follow only the first Light which springs from an imperfect knowledge of Truth, that Christian Life being a Supernatural Life, and which is above all human strength, we ought not rather to choose one kind of life more than another, nor to trouble our selves to avoid the occasions of sinning. We can do all with God, one will say, but we can do nothing without his help. Thus with the aid and help of God I can continue immovable in the most dangerous occasions, and without this aid I cannot uphold my self in the most sure retreats.

But those who speak in this manner, comprehend not the secret of the Conduct of Grace. 'Tis true, God is able to bove us up in the greatest perils; and he does it sometimes when 'tis he himself who engages us therein; but 'tis but seldom that he gives his Grace in so conspicuous a manner. Thus to make us resist temptations, he inspires into us the care and means to avoid them. This is the ordinary way, and whoever neglects

gleets it hath no right to pretend that God upholds him after another manner.

17. If one were ordinarily as recollected in business, as in quiet and repose; If one sunk down oftentimes no more in temptations living in the occasions of sin, than in the way of avoiding them; If one contracted no more spots in trading with the World, than by living a retired life; If great Employments stayed us not more to vanity, than mean and base employments; it would undoubtedly be a kind of visible miracle, God acteth in this sort when he pleaseth, for some chosen Souls. But as he will not that his Conduct over us, appear so visibly miraculous, he does it not very often, and he obliges us thereby to reduce our selves to the ordinary way, and to prefer as much as we can repose before action, a retired life before great Employments; And lastly, the flying all occasions, before a confidence which leads us to expose our selves thereto. Not that it not as facile for God to save as well in one manner as another, but he hath taught us that ordinarily he saves us in the second manner, because he is there, more private and

and less known; and by that means he obligeth us to reduce our selves thereunto.

18. 'Tis upon this method of Grace, and this consequence of means under which God hides his Supernatural Operations, that all the Rules, and all the Spiritual Counsels are grounded, which the Saints inspir'd by God, have given to those whom they have conducted in these means.

These great Saints are not ignorant that 'tis from him all Virtues must be expected, and that he is the cause of all the good actions Christians perform. They were perswaded that he is the Master of mens Hearts, and that he operates in them what he will by an Invincible and an All-powerfull force. Nevertheless they prescribe Rules and practises, as Philosophers might do, who would pretend to obtain Virtue by their own proper force. They will have us to keep our minds always busied about holy thoughts; that we apply our selves without intermission to the reading, and to the studying the Word of God; that we live as it were separate from the World; that we reduce our bodies into bondage by labour and mortification;

tification; that we avoid all that may weaken us, or be an occasion of our fall; that we make a continual tryal upon our selves to resist our passions; that we lead a life uniform, orderly, and not idle, passing by an infinite number of actions prescribed us, as more conform to our condition and to our duty. 'Tis not that they did not know perfectly, that God is able to bestow on us his greatest Graces without making us pass through these exercises, but they knew at the same time that the common order of his Providence is, not to grant us them, but pursuant to these exercises, and by these exercises themselves; and thus he grants in the first place to Souls the Grace to practise them, to make them afterwards to arrive to the Vertues whereunto he desires to raise them, being the Author as well of the actions which he makes them perform to acquire these Vertues, as of Vertues which they acquire by these actions.

19. Nor is there any thing more easie to God then to make us know from time to time our faults, by the infusion of a Light which will place them at once before our eyes. He might likewise correct

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rect us for them in giving us contrary Vertues, without our being obliged to be troubled continually at the sight of our Miseries. But the Saints who know the ways which God makes use of generally to cleanse Souls, forget not to recommend to us this diligent examination and care of our Souls, as one of the chief Duties of Piety, which ought not to end but with our life. Brethren, saith St. Augustine, in expecting the coming
Hm. 15. of this happy day, wherein we shall be joyed with the Angels of Heaven, to Praise God for all Eternity; In expecting till we be arrived at this ineffable joy which we hope for, let us apply our selves as much as we can to the Practice of good Works; let us daily examine our Conscience, and carefully look that there be nothing broken and torn in the Spiritual Robes of our Souls, that we have not received some spots through Intemperance, that we have not burnt them through Choler, not divided them through Envy, that we have not tarnished their Lustre through Avarice. Let us make haste to Cure these Wounds of our Souls, whilst we have yet the Power with the aid of Grace.

20. The great St. Gregory, whom God hath given particularly to his Church,

to

to instruct her with Rules of a spiritual life, recommends nothing so much in his Morals as this Vigilance and Care of our selves, and this diligent examination of good and bad actions. *We must, saith*

he, purifie the Actions even
Greg. Mor. l. 1. c. 17 & 18. of Virtue, by an exact dis-

cussion, for fear of taking bad
for good, and what is imperfect and defe-
cive for very perfect. 'Tis that which is
hinted to us by the Sacrifice which Job
Offered for each of his Children. For 'tis
Offering a Sacrifice to God for each of his
Children to Offer him prayers for each Act
of Virtue; for fear that Wisdom should puff
him up, that Intelligence should make him
stray, that Prudence should puzzle and con-
found him, that Force should make him pre-
sumptuous. And because Holocaust is a
Sacrifice which is absolutely consumed, 'tis
necessary that our Soul be burnt by the fire
of Compunction, and that she consume in this
fire all that she hath of impure in her thoughts.
But no man is able to do it, if he be not
careful to examin all his inward motions, be-
fore he proceed to Actions. This Saint

saith yet, We must bruise Per-
sumes, that is to say consider a-
part all that passeth in the Soul, and reduce
it as it were into dust by this examination.

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We must take off the skin of the Victim, and cut it into bits, that is to say we must take from our Actions this outward Surface, which makes them appear to us virtuous, that we may see even to the bottom of them.

This instruction is often repeated in St. Gregories Works, that one may say that 'tis the principal Foundation of his spiritual Conduct, and far from exempting the Just more advanced in this Practice, he on the contrary placeth their advancement in the encreasing this Care and Vigilance, and in this attention upon themselves.

21. Saint Barnard hath writ four Books to bring Souls to this exercise of examining their Actions and Conduct before God; and he makes it the choif Duty of a Christian life; but to shew in a word the *Idea* he had of true Piety, he says, *That 'tis to apply ones self to consider what one is. Quid est Pietas? Vacare Considerationi*; and that this Consideration consists in foreseeing ones actions to regulate them before God, to correct ones faults, and to think what is ones Duty. And 'tis remarkable that this Saint gives not these instructions to a Novice, but to a great Pope, whom he

he ought to imagin in a state of Perfection, having been raised to this first dignity of the Church for his eminent Virtues.

22. When the Philosophers, who supposed that Virtue hath no other Source but Nature, prescribed Rules to attain it, they prescribed no other then these above. They recommended to us, like these Saints, this examination, and this continual care and vigilance over our actions, as may be seen in the Verses attributed to *Pythagoras*, and in several places of *Seneca*. Did not St. *Augustine*, St. *Gregory*, and St. *Barnard* know that Virtue is a pure effect of the mercy of God, and not of our endeavours and reflections? Doubtless they knew it, seeing that they taught it in so many places of their Books; but likewise they knew that God did not give it ordinarily to men, but by the practice of certain means and exercises, to which he applies them by his Grace. And thus the principal care of those who have the Charge of Souls is to put them in the way of practicing these means, by which they may obtain God's Grace, and that it is tempting him to act otherways, and to desire that he may grant us

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them by some other way then that which his Wisdom hath chosen; and which he hath given us to understand by the example of all the Saints.

23. Wherefore do men believe that the Fathers have testified so much doubt of those who do not think of being converted, except at the hour of death? Is it because 'tis not as easie for God to touch sinners by his Grace at the last moment as at another time; or that that of death is excluded from the general Promise, which God hath made to Men to receive them into his Grace if they be Converted sincerely? Without doubt 'tis nothing of that, God is alway equally powerfull, and the bosom of his Mercy is always equally open to converted Sinners. But 'tis because the Fathers have thought that these Conversions were not generally speaking sincere, and that they were rather an effect of the state wherein they found themselves, than an alteration of the heart. And the reason of it is, that in the common way the Heart doth not change thus all at once the object and the end. Outward Actions may be changed easily in an instant; but Love which holds the principal place of the Heart scarcely

scarcely changes in an instant. It must, ordinarily speaking, be discouraged by little and little, and that there be another to take its place by divers progresses. 'Tis thus that Human passions are changed, and God who wills that the Operations of his Grace be not sensibly distinguished from those of Nature, follows commonly the same method. He begins to shake the Heart through fear, before he touch it with his Love, and he often touches it a long time by beginnings of Love, before he makes himself master of it by a ruling Love, which turns the heart towards him as towards its last end, and which frees and delivers it from the bondage of the love of Creatures. Thus as the Conversion of dying sinners cannot pass through these degrees, it must be miraculous to be true. The Church despairs not of this Miracle, which is the reason why she grants the Sacraments to dying People: But she fears mightily that these Sentiments which appear in sinners in this state, are only those light beginnings either of the Fear or of the Love of God, which are not sufficient for a true and hearty Conversion. And 'tis this which obliges sinners not only to

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labour, but also to make hast to labour
seriously for their Salvation; that their
love may have time to increase, and to
arrive unto a condition that one may be
able to say they are truly Converted.
To act otherways is to tempt God,
nay, and to tempt him after a most
dangerous manner, in willing him to do
a Miracle in the Order of his Grace, to
save us. And in this fashion all those
who expect to be Converted to God at
their death, besides their other sins, do
yet commit that of tempting God,
which often causes the very utmost of
it.

24. Spiritual Riches are all gratis-as
from God, and yet it is written; That
the hands of those who labour strongly
heap up Riches. *Manns fortium divitias
parat.* And the Scripture attributes on
the contrary Spiritual poverty to the
want of this Labour. *Egestatem operata
est manus remissa*, that is to say, that
negligence and sloth cause the poverty,
and the misery of Souls; so great a care
hath God to hide the works of his
Grace under the resemblance of those of
Nature.

25. Prayer is doubtless that of all
Christian actions wherein the need of
Grace

Grace appears most. Therefore the Spirit of God is called by a particular Title, the Spirit of Prayers, *Spiritus Precum*. And it is said of him, that he prays by unspeakable sighs. It would seem then that this so Divine exercise should need neither preparation nor rules, and that it had nothing to do, but to expect the Inspiration of Grace. And yet the Wise man advises us expressly, that we must prepare the Soul before Prayer, for fear of being like those who tempt God; *Anie Orationem prepara Animam tuam, & noli esse quasi homo, qui tentat Deum*: Shewing thus, that all those who pray being unprepared, fall into the sin of tempting God, and that one of the principal causes of the Lukewarmness in our Prayers, is the little care we have to prepare our selves thereunto, by the means prescribed to us by Scripture, which consists in withdrawing our hearts, and minds from wandring and vain amusements, that we may find them again when they must be presented to God in Prayer, being impossible that the heart doth not run after its Treasure, and busie it self with the objects it possesseth.

26. 'Tis thus that truth unites what

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appears contrary to those who know it but imperfectly. All depends on God, therefore we must labour, say certain Hereticks, we must not labour. Therefore Virtue depends not on Grace, say the *Pelagians*. But the Catholick Doctrine consists in uniting these Truths, and casting away the false conclusions. We must labour faith this Doctrine, and yet all depends on God. Labour is an effect of Grace, and the ordinary means to obtain Grace, to think that labour and virtues are not the Gifts of God, is a *Pelagian* presumption. To slight the means God makes use of generally to communicate his Grace to Men, is to tempt God in subverting the order of his Wisdom. Thus Piety consists in practising these means, and acknowledging that 'tis God who makes us practise them;

27. I know well that human Understanding, which is dazzled by the splendour of Divine Truths, and which is puzzled with its vain reasonings, may yet find difficulty in this alliance of Labour and Grace, and in supposing with *St. Austin* and *St. Thomas*, that what power one may have to do acts of Piety by other Graces, they are never done
effe-

effectually, unless God determine the will by efficacious Grace. He is easily inclined to conclude that we need only continue in repose, untill we perceive these efficacious motions, which make us practise them; that when we shall perceive them we shall not fail to labour, being that Grace will apply us thereto by a Virtue all powerful, and not having them, it is certain that we shall practice them only in an unprofitable manner.

'Tis an objection which comes easily into the minds of those who follow their own reasoning in these matters, which regard the Conduct of God upon Souls. The Fathers who were not ignorant thereof have answered thereto in divers solid ways, by shewing after what manner it may be truly said, that it is always in mans Power to satisfie the duties of Christian Piety, and that 'tis their fault if they do not accomplish them.

28. But as it is not convenient to answer thereunto in a Theological way, it is enough to shew that it hath nothing of Solidity, even according to human reason, and that the necessity we have of efficacious Grace to Practise Christian Virtues, may well serve to humble

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ble men, and to keep them in a state of fear and trembling; but that it can never justly carry them neither to Idleness, to Trouble, nor despair, because we have always by nature it self a means which sufficeth to keep our minds in quiet, and to banish away trouble and inquietude. The reason is, that altho to labour according to God, to resist our faults like Christians, to Pray, and to practice good Works by the spirit of true Charity, we have need of efficacious and supernatural Grace. It is nevertheless certain that each of these actions in particular may be done sometimes without Grace, by a motive of Self-love and human Respect, and by a fear purely servile. Now though there be an infinite difference betwixt Self-love and the love of God, nevertheless the motives and the actions which spring from these two principles so different are sometimes so like, and we have so little light to penetrate to the bottom of our hearts, that we do not distinguish with certainty by what Principle we act, and whether through Covetousness or through Charity. We may well say with *St. Paul*, That we do not think our selves guilty of any thing, but we ought

ought to joyn with him, that for all that we are not Justified, and that we cannot Judge our selves, because we do not know our selves perfectly.

We have therefore always a principle in us to accomplish what there is of outward shew in these exercises of a Christian life. And as we are not able to know certainly when we have efficacious Grace, except it be by a human Principle that we act, likewise we cannot always know when we act by a Principle of human Interest, Grace not being the principle of our Action. We may take Charity for Self-love, and Self-love for Charity, and in this obscurity Reason obliges us to take a resolution to do always what is Commanded, leaving to God the determination of the Principle which makes us act.

'Tis not that our endeavour to purifie our selves is not requisite, as much as is possible from all self-love, and from all Interest; but this desire does not assure us that we are exempt. For one may desire through Self-love to be freed from Self-love; as one may wish for Humility through Pride. It makes it self an infinite Circle of reflections upon reflections on those actions of the Soul,
and

and there is always in us a certain bottom and Root which remains unknown to us our whole life time.

'Tis the State wherein God wills that men live in this World. We are condemned to these obscurities by his Justice; and his Mercy renders them advantageous to us, when it causeth us to make use of it to become more humble. And thus it is manifest that these Obscurities being unavoidable on the one part, and on the other useful, what we have to do, is to rest in quiet, and to adore in Peace the Goodness of God who ordains them for our good, and to act nevertheless the most sincerely, and the most disinterestedly that possibly we can, which is prescrib'd us by his Laws, in expecting the Judgment he will lay upon us in the other life in making us know the bottom of our hearts, which we shall never know clearly in this.

The which sufficeth at least to procure us a human peace, which is not easily distinguished from the Peace of God; and which is always worth more then trouble which overwhelms the Soul, and reduceth her to Idleness and Despair.

294 This reason ought to make us prefer the practice of all the exercises of

of a Christian life, before a soft, negligent, and slothful life, because it is certain, that those who do not practice them are in a wrong way, and that few of those who pass their lives in disorder will be saved, seeing that it cannot be, unless God Convert them by an extraordinary Mercy, which is very rare in the order of Grace it self.

On the contrary those who practice these holy exercises, are all in some sort in the way of Peace, they are in the company of those who go to Heaven, and have also this comfort, That there are very few of those who shall practice them a long time, who arrive not at happiness; perseverance in an orderly life being the most certain mark of Charity, because Cupidity is Wavering of it self; and continues not long in the persuance of one and the same design.

30. Thus the knowledge of the need and want of efficacious Grace, to act like a Christian; doth indeed never puzzle those who hearken to and follow Reason; because they always see their way. They know they must pray to God without intermission, mortify continually their Passions, always keep a Guard upon themselves, strive even to Death for Victory,

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Victory, never to be tired with practicing good Works, and to be ruled in all things. They know that the uncertainty wherein they are, whether it be Grace or Self-love which moves them to act, ought never to hinder them from acting. *Perform, perform these things, faith*

St. Augustin, through fear of
Aug. Ser. 13. Punishment, if ye cannot do
de Verb. Ap. them for the love of Justice,

that is to say for, Charity. They ought then to practice them always: 'Tis what is certain and indubitable, and in practicing them they ought not to judge that they act only by covetousness and interest, seeing that their hearts are unknown to them, and that they ought not to judge rashly of themselves, no more then of others.

31: In a word we must Pray, Labour, and live in quiet even to Death, in abandoning our selves to God, and saying to him with the Prophet, *In manu tui Sortes mea, My Lot is in thy hands*, both for this life and the life to come, for the present, and for Eternity. Marching in this sort in the ways of God with a persevering Fidelity, if we never have absolutely a certainty that the holy Ghost dwels in us, and that
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'tis he who causeth us to act, we shall not forbear nevertheless to have thereof a just confidence, and this confidence encreasing more and more according as we shall advance in Virtue, will only leave us so much fear as is necessary to resist the Tentation of Presumption and Pride.

32. There are yet many other ways of tempting God besides those we have set down. For as this sin consists in withdrawing our selves from the wisdom of God, and in obliging us to act contrary to the ordinary rules of his Prudence, whether in the order of Nature, or in that of Grace, we may tempt God in as many fashions as we can dispense with these rules, in hopes that God will act towards us in an extraordinary manner.

For Example, 'tis tempting God to engage our selves in Charges of the Church without meet and convenient Vocation, flattering our selves with the hopes that God will rectifie our entrance, and will not forbear to grant us the necessary Graces to acquit our selves of the Charge which we have rashly undertaken. Because the ordinary way to obtain necessary Graces for this employ,

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is to enter thereupon by the dore of holy Vocation; and if God repair this fault in some in making them enter again as it were anew into the Charge which they have usurped; 'tis an extraordinary favour which no man can promise himself without rashness and tempting God.

33. It is the very same with all other engagements in the several conditions of this life. We tempt God when we enter into them without a reasonable assurance, That we have necessary dispositions to acquit our selves of the obligations which are belonging to them. A man who enters into Office tempts God, if he do not perceive in himself a force able to resist Injustice, according as the Scripture saith, *Noli querere fieri Judex, nisi valeas perrumpere Iniquitates.* Those who engage themselves in Mariage tempt God, unless they be disposed to satisfie the Obligations of that State, and have strength enough to suffer all that must be born withall therein, and to bear up against the temptations which are either from this state in general, or from the particular choice which they make of the party they marry. They who embrace a religious life tempt God, if they have
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not fit qualities to persevere in that holy Vocation, and to undergo pains and labour. And therefore those who exclude such as have not these qualities, far from doing them an injury, do them on the contrary the greatest Charity which could be done them; being they hinder them from contracting an engagement, the consequences whereof could not be prosperous to them. Lastly, what enterprise men form to themselves, what design of life men undertake, what State and Condition men embrace, they must always, according to the Gospel, compute the Charges, that is to say, examine what strength God hath given them, and what willingness, to judge thereby if they be not too foolhardy in engaging themselves therein.

34. If we do but reflect on mens Conduct in the choice of the employment and state wherein they pass their lives, we shall find that there is not only nothing more common then this manner of tempting God, but that 'tis the most ordinary Source of Confusion which Reigns in all States and Conditions. For it is clear that we do not choose them through the consideration of the relation, and the proportion they have with
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the dispositions which God hath put in in us, but through certain Laws of Opinion which mens Vanity hath established in the World; according to which we believe, that being of such and such a Birth, and that having a certain quantity of Goods, we cannot but embrace such kind of lives, and that all others are against our interest. In this manner there are some who think that there is no other way to be taken for them then that of the Sword, or an Ecclesiastical Profession: Others are of opinion that they cannot live in the World, except they be Magistrates. This Daughter must be Religious, because in the condition she is she cannot be Married. Thus we reduce our selves to a straight by these Chimerical Laws; and as God follows them not in the distribution of of his Talents and Graces, it happens from thence that we strictly forbid, through fancy all employments which God permits us, and are very remiss in performing those he commands us. We engage our selves therein therefore rashly, and likewise continue therein; we tempt God continually by the exercise of these ill chosen employments, and instead of getting his favour and assistance, we

we get, without intermission, the effects of his wrath, and the loss of his Friendship. One may easily imagin what must be the consequences of this Conduct.

35. We must observe yet upon this subject, that although men in this life be always in a continual want of Grace, they are not nevertheless in an equal degree of weakness and strength, and that the different measure wherewith God distributes his Grace to them, makes according to the language of the Fathers and holy Scripture, that we may say there are works and employments proportionable to the Grace of certain Souls, but which are not so to others. There are some who would lose themselves in striving to imitate certain actions of Saints, because they want the power and force to undergo them like these Saints. It is requisite then that each know what he has received from God, and if he is not able to judge thereof by himself, let him judge thereof at least by the light of understanding persons. Otherwise in advancing himself beyond the gifts God hath given him, he tempts him, and is in danger of committing many great faults by those rash advances.

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36. God having been willing to conjoyn men together by these reciprocal endeavours or Duties of Charity, to render them dependant one of another, as well in respect of a spiritual as a temporal life, and communicating to them for that purpose more ordinarily the light they have need of for their Guide, by the means of Pastors and Spiritual persons, which they may consult as well as by himself, from thence it follows that 'tis also to tempt God in some sort not to submit to the order, in refusing any ones Counsel, and following only in the conduct of their life, their own proper thoughts and reasons; because this is to oblige God to communicate his light to us in an extraordinary manner.

37. It may be said also, that every mortal sin which we commit in hopes to be absolved thereof by Penance, is one way of Tempting God. For the Ordinary way of Salvation, whether for those who as yet have not lost the innocence of Baptism, or for those who have repaired it by Penance, is to conserve the Grace they have received, and to labour to augment and increase it every day by the exercise of Christian Vertues.

To pretend then that God will make us reenter into the way of Salvation, although we lost it by grievous crimes, is to withdraw our selves from his ordinary Conduct, and to force him to do, in the order of his Grace, Miracles in our behalf.

38. Lastly, even just men, and persons living orderly tempt God in many ways, and often when they are not aware of it. For the Gospel tells us that the means to obtain grace requisite for us, whether to acquit our selves of our Obligations, or to enter safely into the least engagements, and form the least design is to consult God upon all occasions, and to pray to him continually; every time they neglect to practice this means, and engage themselves in small and trivial enterprises, in visits, in conversations, in works of Piety, without applying themselves to God, without looking towards him, without advising with him, without praying to him, in some sort it may be said, that they ~~Tempt God.~~ And as all the faults which we commit in our life time happens through a neglect of practicing the means to avoid them, it is evident that men sin not, but because they

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they Tempt God, and thus this sin
which they think on so rarely, and
which they dream so little of, is the
cause of all Just mens fallings, and the
loss of all those who perish.

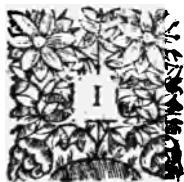
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The Fourth Treatise.

Of Plays.

1.



It hath scarcely been known but in this Age, that men have undertaken to justify Plays, and to make them pass as Recreations which might be joyn'd with Devotion. Former Ages were more simple and sincere in good and bad. Those who made profession of Piety, did witness by their actions and words, the horror they had for those Profane Sights. Those who were possessed with passion for a Theater, acknowledged at least, that they did not follow in that the Rules of Christian Religion. But in this Age there are found those who

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have pretended in this point to be able to conjoyn Piety, and the Spirit of the World together. They are not content to follow vice, they will have it honour'd, and that it be not wither'd and decay'd by the shamefull name of Vice, which always troubles a little the pleasure which they take therein, by the horror which accompanies it. They have therefore endeavour'd to act in some sort, that Conscience might be accommodated with passion, and not to come and trouble it by its importunate Remorses. And this is it they have taken so much pains about, upon the Subject of Plays. For as there is hardly any Recreation more agreeable to worldly People than that, so it was very important for them to assure themselves thereby of a sweet and quiet enjoying of it; to the end that nothing should be wanting to complear their satisfaction. The means which those undertook who were the cunningest, was to form to themselves a certain Metaphysical Idea of Comedies, and to purifie this Idea from all kind of sin. Plays, say they, are a representation of Actions and Words, as it were present. What harm therein I pray? And after having justified

fied in this sort the general Idea of Plays; they think that they have proved that there is no sin in them, and in conclusion they go to them without any scruple. But the way to free themselves of this Illusion, is to consider on the contrary, Plays not in a Chimerical Speculation, but in the common and ordinary practice, whereof we are witnesses. We must take notice what is the Life of Actors and Players, what is the Substance and end of Plays, what effects they generally produce in the minds of those who represent them, or who see them acted or represented; what impressions they leave in them, and afterwards to examin if all that have any relation to the Life, Sentiments, and the Duties of a true Christian. This is it that's design'd to be done in this Treatise. But as the generality of Reasons men make use of, tend naturally to the reading of Romances, they may be easily comprehended therein, and those who read this are intreated to comprehend them therein, when they are not expressly mention'd in this.

2. 'Tis impossible to consider the Trade of Players and Actors, and to compare them with Christian Professi-

on, but we must acknowledge that there is nothing more unworthy a Child of God, and Member of Jesus Christ than this sort of Employment. We do not speak only of the gross abuses, and the dissolute manner Women appear upon the stage, because the upholders of Plays, separate always these sort of disorders by imagination, altho never effectively. We speak only of what is entirely and absolutely inseperable. 'Tis a recreation which tends to the divertisement of others, where Men and Women represent passions of hatred and choler, ambition, revenge, and chiefly of Love. They must express them the most naturally and the liveliest, that possibly they can, and they cannot do it unless they stir up in some sort these passions in themselves, and that they be imprinted in their Souls, that they may express them outwardly by actions and words. Those then who express a passion of Love, must be touched in some manner with that passion whilst they act it, and they cannot think that this Impression which they have excited so willingly, can be forgotten suddenly, and that it should not leave in them a great inclination for this same Passion, which
they

they were willing to resent. Thus Plays are by their nature the Schools and exercises of vice; being that they excite in us necessarily vicious Passions. What if we consider that the whole life of Players is employed in this exercise; that they pass it absolutely to learn in particular, or to repeat amongst themselves, or to act before the Spectators the image of some vice; that they have nothing almost in their minds but these follies: It will be easie to see that 'tis impossible to accord this Trade or Calling with the Purity of our Religion. And thus it must be allowed to be an Employ profane, and unbecoming a Christian; that those who follow it are obliged to leave it, as all the Councils do command: and that consequently 'tis not permitted to others to contribute to entertain them in a profession contrary to Christianity, nor to authorise it by their Presence.

3. As the passion of Love is the strongest impression which sin hath made upon our Souls; which appears clearly enough by the horrible disorders it produceth in the World; so there is nothing more dangerous than to excite it to nourish it, and to destroy what restrains and

stops its course. Now that which helps most thereto is a certain horror, which custom and good Education imprints therein; and nothing lessens this horror more than Plays; because this passion appears there with honour, and in a manner, which instead of rendring it horrible, is capable on the contrary to cause it to be loved. It appears there without shame or infamy. There they boast of being touched with it. Thus the Mind is insnared by little and little. They learn how to suffer it, and how to speak of it; and the Soul afterwards is easily caught with it in following the propensity of Nature.

4. 'Tis needless to say in justification of Plays and Romances, that therein is only represented lawfull Passions, and which have marriage as the end they aim at. For tho Marriage may make good use of Concupiscence, 'tis nevertheless in it self always ill, and it is not lawfull to excite it, neither in our selves nor in others. We ought always to look upon it as the shamefull effect of sin, as a source of poison able to infect us every moment, if God stop not the bad causes of it. Thus from some apparent honesty, wherewith Plays and Romances endea-

endeavour to cloath it, we cannot deny but even in that, they are contrary to good manners, being that they imprint an agreeable Idea of a vicious Passion, and that they make of it an Heroick quality, there being none which appears with more splendor, then that in these Heroes of the Plays.

5. Marriage checks Concupiscence, but makes it not orderly. It restrains always something of disorder which is proper to it, and it is not but by force that it keeps it self within the limits which Reason prescribes it. Now exciting this passion by Plays, we do not imprint at the same time the love of that which governs it. The Beholders receive only the impression of the passion, and little or none of the moderation of it. The Author stops where he pleases this Passion represented by a Stroke of his Pen; but he doth not stop it so in those in whom he excites it. The representation of a legitimate Love, and of that which is not so, causes almost the same effect; and excites only the same motion which acts afterwards differently, according to the different dispositions which it meets with; and often also the Representation of a

private passion, with this vail of honour is most dangerous, because the Mind looks upon it with less precaution, as it is received there with less horror, and because the Heart is carried thereunto with less resistance.

6. That which renders Plays more dangerous, is because they disperse all the remedies, which are able to hinder the bad impression they make. The Heart is softened by the pleasure of them. The Mind thereby is altogether busied with outward objects, and absolutely besotted with the follies which are there represented, and consequently not in a condition of Christian vigilance, necessary to resist temptations, and like a Reed bent by all sorts of winds. There is great likelihood that no body hath ever thought of preparing themselves against them by Prayer, seeing that the Spirit of God would much rather incline to avoid this dangerous sort of Divertisement, than to beseech his Grace to be preserved from the corruption, which there it met withall. If then Persons who live in solitude, and in retirement from the World, do yet find great difficulty in a Christian Life, even in Monasteries. If they receive tryals
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of wordly Commerce at the same time; when 'tis Charity and necessity that engages them therein, and that they keep themselves upon their guards as much as they can, that they may resist: What may be the wounds, and downfall of those, who leading a life absolutely sensual, expose themselves to temptations, which the strongest are not able to undergo? Ought it not to be said of them, comparing them with holy persons, what *Job* said of man, comparing him with the Angels, *Ecce qui serviunt ei non sunt stabiles; & in Angelis suis reperit pravitatem; quanto magis qui habitant domos luteas consumentur a Tinea?* If these Spirits which serve God as Ministers are not stable, and if he find fault in the Angels themselves, by how much more reason will Souls enclosed in Bodies, as in houses of clay, be subject to corruption and sin? Or what *Esaias* said, *Super huminum populi mei Spina & vepres ascenderunt; quanto magis super omnem Domum gaudij Civitatis exultantis?* If the ground of my people, saith our Lord, is covered with Briars and Thorns; that is, if the Souls which sigh after their Celestial Country, are sometimes pierced by the Stings of Sin, what disorders will not those

those run into who live in Pleasures, and whose hearts are filled with all the foolish joys of this World? *Quanto magis super omnem domum gaudii Civitatis exultantis?*

7. We ought to consider that Plays are tentations taught with gayety, which seperates and takes away Gods grace from us, and inclines him more to forsake and abandon us to our own proper corruption, then those whereinto we fall unawares. It is rashness, Pride, and Impiety to think that we are capable to resist, without Grace, the tentations we meet with in plays; and it is a presumption and a folly to believe that God will always deliver us from danger by his Grace, when we expose our selves voluntarily, and without necessity.

8. We deceive our selves mightily in thinking that Plays make no ill Impressions upon us, because we perceive not that they excite in us any ill desires. There are many steps before we come to an entire corruption of mind and heart; and 'tis always much harm to the Soul to destroy the Rampiers which save it from tentations. 'Tis to wrong her much to accustome her to behold these sorts of Objects without dread, and with

a kind of Complacency, and to possess her that 'tis a pleasure to love and to be loved. The aversion which she had for them served her as Fortresses which stopt the passage to the Devil, and when they are ruined by Plays, he enters afterwards easily. There is often a long time that we begin to fall before we chance to be aware of it. The misfortunes of the Soul are long and tedious; they have preparations and Progresses, and it happens often that we lye under these temptations, only because we have weakned our selves in occasions of small importance.

9. Let those then (who perceive not that Plays and Romances excite in their minds these Passions which are ordinarily apprehended) not think themselves, for all that, safe, and let them Imagine that these Lectures and these Sights have done them no harm. The Word of God which is the Seed of life, and the word of the Devil which is the Seed of death have this common, That they remain often a long time hidden in the heart without producing any sensible effect. God oftentimes joyns the Salvation of certain persons to words of Truth which he hath sown in their Soul.

Soul twenty years before, and which he awakens when he pleaseth, to make them produce the fruits of life. And the devil contents himself likewise sometimes to replenish the memory with these Images, without going further, or forming yet any sensible temptation. But at length, after a long time he enlivens them, even without our so much as remembering how they are crept in, to the end that they may produce the fruits of Death, *ut fructificent Morti*, which is the only mark he proposeth in all that he hath done in respect of men. We may say then to those, who boast that Plays and Romances provoke not in them the least evil thought, that they expect a little, that the Devil will know when to take his time, and will be sure to find a favourable occasion. Possibly engaging them to him by other ties, he neglects none to make use of those which are most visible; but if he hath need of them to destroy them, he will not be wanting to employ them.

10. If it should be true, that Playes could produce no bad effects upon the minds of certain persons, they should not therefore take them for innocent recreations, nor believe that they are not guilty

guilty in assisting at them. A Play is not acted for one single person. 'Tis a shew which is exposed to all sorts of humors, the most part whereof are weak and feeble, and to whom consequently it is very dangerous. 'Tis their fault, will you say, to be present in this condition; It is true, but 'tis your fault likewise, seeing that you make them contribute to the making them look upon Plays as an indifferent thing. The more you are orderly in your other actions, the more they are bold to imitate you in that. Why, say they, Shall we scruple going to Plays, seeing that virtuous people go thereunto? You participate then of their Sin; and if Plays hurt you, not of themselves, you are prejudiced by those damages which others receive by your example; and thus you are the most blameable of all. Worldly persons of whom we take no example, are scarcely faulty but by their proper sins. But those who will pass for virtuous, and who practise indeed some good Works, are faulty by their proper sins, and by those of others; and lose not only the merit of their good works, but they portion them in some sort, in making them serve to engage others in sin.

11. God asketh of men, properly speaking, only their love ; but he demands it absolutely. He will have no division of it. And as he is their Sovereign Good, he Wills that they fix themselves no where else, nor that they set their minds upon any creature, because no Creature is their end. The fulness of Charity which we ow to God, saith *St. Augustine*, permits not that we let any Current run out. *Nullum rivum duci extra patitur*. Therefore what goodness soever can be imagined in the love of a mortal Creature, this Love is always vicious and illegitimate, when springing from any other than the love of God; and it cannot spring from thence, when 'tis a love of passion, and self-interest; which makes us find our joy and pleasure in this Creature. A Christian who knows what he owes to God, ought not to suffer any alteration in his heart, nor any fixedness of this sort without condemning it; without being sorry for it; and without beseeching God to be delivered from it, and he ought to have an extreme horror that he himself should be the object of this passion, and this inclination in any others, and thus in some sort their Idol; seeing that Love

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is a worship which is only due to God, as God can be only honoured by Love. *Nec colitur nisi amando.* 'Tis this which shews that there is a great number of Women, who believing themselves innocent, as having indeed some horror of gross vices, are yet nevertheless criminal before God, because they are very glad to hold in mens hearts a place which belongs only to God. These Women take pleasure in being the object of their passion: They are glad that people fix themselves to them, that they look upon them with sentiments, not only of esteem, but of kindness, and they suffer without trouble, that they witness it to them by this prophane Language, which is called cajolling. Therefore what care soever we may take to separate Playes and Romances from these images of shameful disorders, we shall never take away the danger, because we see always therein a lively representation of this passionate tye of Men towards Women, which cannot be innocent, and which will never be hindred so long as Women are delighted with the pleasure of being loved and adored by Men, which is no less dangerous, nor less contagious for them, than the Images of disorder, which

which are both visible and criminal.

12. Plays and Romances do not only stir up the passions, but they teach also the language of Passions; that is to say, the art of expressing it, and making it appear agreeable and ingenious, which is no small evil. There are many who stuff them with bad designs, because they want address to explicate themselves. And it often happens, that some persons without being touched with passion, and desiring simply to shew their wit, find themselves afterward insensibly engaged in passions, which they only counterfeited at the beginning,

13. The pleasure of Plays is a hurtful Pleasure, because ordinarily it comes from a corrupt bottom, which is stirr'd up in us, by things we see therein. And to be convinced thereof, we need but consider, that when we have a great horror for an action we take no pleasure in seeing it represented; and 'tis that which obliges Poets to hide from the sight of the beholders, all that may cause this horror in them. When we feel not the same aversion for foolish Loves, and other disorders represented in Plays, and that we take delight in beholding them. 'Tis a Token that we hate them not.

not, and that they excite in us, I know not what inclinations to vice, which spring from the corruption of the heart : If we had the Idea of Vice in its natural deformity, we should not be able to suffer the Image of it ; therefore one of the greatest Poets of this age observes, that one of his best pieces hath not pleased upon the Stage ; because it struck the minds of the spectator with the horrible Idea of a prostitution, whereunto a Holy Woman had been condemned. But what he drew from thence to justify his Play, viz. That the Theater is now so chaste, that men cannot suffer dishonest objects, is what manifestly condemn'd it. For we may learn by this example, that men approve in some manner all that is suffered, and all that men see with pleasure upon the Theatre, seeing that they cannot suffer what men have a horror for. And consequently, there being so many corruptions, and vicious passions in Plays, the most innocent, 'tis observable, that men hate not these disorders when they take delight to see them acted.

14. 'Tis yet a great abuse, and which deceives very many, to consider no other bad effects in these representations, but that

that of giving contrary thoughts to purity, and believing thus, that they hurt us not when they do it not in this manner; as if there were no other vices but that one; and that we were not susceptible of them. Nevertheless, if we consider Plays made by those who have been the most affected to this honesty, we shall find they have only forborn to represent some objects which are entirely dishonest, to paint others as criminal, and which are not less infective. All their Works are nothing but lively representatives of passions of Pride, Ambition, of Jealousie, and Vengeance, and chiefly of this Romanzick virtue, which is indeed, nothing but a furious love of ones self. The more it colours these vices with the Image of greatness and generosity, the more it renders them dangerous and capable of re-entring the best Souls, and the imitation of these passions does not please us; but because the bottom of our corruption doth excite at the same time, a motion altogether like, which transforms us in some manner, and makes us embrace the passion which is represented to us.

15. It is so true, that Plays are almost always a representation of vicious passions, that the most part of Christian virtues are incapable of appearing upon the Stage. Silence, Patience, Moderation, Wisdom, Poverty, Repentance are no Virtues, the representation of which can divert the Spectators; and above all, we never hear Humility spoken of, nor the bearing of Injuries. It would be strange to see a modest and silent Religious person represented. There must be something of great and renown'd according to men, or at least something of lively and animated, which is not met withal in Christian Gravity and Wisdom, and therefore those who have been desirous to introduce Holy Men and Women upon the Stage, have been forced to make them appear proud; and to make them utter discourses more proper for the antient Roman Heroes, than for Saints and Martyrs. Their Devotion upon the Stage, ought also to be always a little extraordinary.

16. Common Affections are not proper to give the pleasure which is sought for in Plays; and there would be nothing more cold than Christian Marriage freed from passion on every side.

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There must always be some transport, that jealousy may enter; that the consent of Parents may be found contrary, and that Intrigues may be made use of, to make their designs Proper. Thus the way is laid open to those who shall be possessed with the same passion, that they may make use of the same means, to arrive at the same end.

17. The drift of Plays engage Poets to represent nothing but vicious passions. Because the end they propose to themselves is to please the Spectators, which they cannot do, but by putting into the mouths of the Actors; words and sentiments conform to those whom they make to speak, or to whom they speak. Now they hardly represent any but wicked persons, and they speak only before worldly people, whose hearts and minds are vitiated by disordered Passions, and wicked Maxims.

18. Worldly people the ordinary spectators of Plays have three principle inclinations. They are full of Concupiscence, full of Pride, and full of esteem for human Generosity, which is nothing but a disguised Pride. Thus Poets, to please them by adapting themselves to these inclinations, are obliged to act in
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such sort, that their works may roul always upon these three passions, and fill them also with love, sentiments of Pride, and Maxims of human Honour. 'Tis this which causes that nothing is more pernicious then poetick and Romantick Morality; because 'tis nothing but a Collection of false opinions, which spring from these three Fountains, and which are only agreeable, as flattering the depraved inclinations of the Readers and Spectators.

'Tis by the same corruptness of mind that men, without trouble, hear horrible opinions of a person who would fight a Duel with his friend, because the world believed he was the Author of a business, whereof he thought he was innocent.

Men listen with delight to the words of a Father to his Son, to whom he gave charge to revenge him.

And yet, considering these sentiments according to reason, there is nothing more detestable. But men think that 'tis permitted to Poets to propose the most damnable Maxims, provided they be conformable to the Character of their Personages.

19. 'Tis not imaginable that these wicked

wicked Maxims which plays are stuffed with should do no hurt, because men go not to them to instruct their judgments, but to divert themselves: For they do not cease to engraft their Impressions without mens being aware of them; and a Gentleman will perceive an affront more lively, and will be more easily inclin'd to revenge himself by the Criminal way, which is very frequent in most parts, when he shall have heard and seen how a light affront is resented in a Play upon the Principle of a false Idea of Honour.

The reason whereof is, that Passions excite him, not only by objects, but also by false opinions wherewith the mind is prepossessed. The opinion that Chimerical Honour is so great a Good that it must be maintained with the loss of life it self, is that which hath produced, for so long time, the brutish rage of the Gentry of many parts. If we never spoke of those who fight Duels, but as mad and ridiculous people, as indeed they are, if we never represented this Fantome of Honour, which they make their Idol, but as a Chimera and Folly; if we had a care never to form Images of Revenge, but as base actions,

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and full of Cowardise, the motives which the Person offended would feel, would be infinitely more dull. But that which renders them more lively, is the false Impression that there is of Cowardise to suffer an Injury. Now it cannot be denied but Plays which are stuffed with these bad Maxims, contribute much to fortifie this Impression, because the mind being transported with them, and as it were besides it self, instead of checking these sentiments, gives way thereunto without resisting, and placeth its pleasure in feeling the motions they inspire, which disposes it to produce the same or the like upon occasion.

20. Yet that which renders the Image of the passions, which Plays propose to us, more dangerous, is that the Poets, to make them agreeable, are obliged, not only to represent them in a very lively manner, but also to divest them of what looks more horrible, and to paint them out in such a sort by the nimbleness of their wit, that instead of gaining the hatred and the aversion of Beholders, they may on the contrary get their affection. So that a Passion which only causes horrors, if it were presented in its natural dress, becomes
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lovely by the ingenious manner by which it is expressed.

If we divest the Image of the Passion of Anger of all the Paint the Poet bestows on it, and that we consider it by reason, we can imagin nothing more detestable then the fury of an incensed person, whom a foolish Passion causeth to violate all the Laws of Nature. Nevertheless this same disposition of mind so criminal in it-self hath nothing that is horrible, being dressed up in these Ornaments, and the Spectators are more inclined to love this Fury then to hate it. We have made use of these instances on purpose, because they are less dangerous to be reported. But it is true that the Poets practice this Artifice of disguising Vices into subjects much more hurtful then that. And if we consider almost all Plays and all Romances, we shall hardly find therein any thing but vicious Passions beautified and set forth with a certain Paint which makes them agreeable to worldly people. Now if it be not permitted to love Vices, may one take delight in things which tend to render them amiable?

21. A Christian having renounced the World, his Pleasures, and his Poms, cannot

cannot seek after pleasure as pleasure, nor divertisement for divertisement sake. He must, that he may be able to use them without sinning, act in some manner, that one may say truly of him, that he useth them with the moderation of one who doth use them, and not with the passion of one who loves them, *Utentis modestia, non amantis affectu*. Now as the sole use of recreation is to renew the force of the mind and body, when tired with labours; so it is evident, that 'tis not permitted to divert ones self over much, but as it is in eating.

'Tis easie to conclude from thence, that 'tis not a Christian life, but a Pagan and brutal life; to employ the greatest part of our time in recreation, seeing that 'tis not permitted for ones self, but only to render the soul more capable of labour. For if no body doubt but that 'tis a dangerous life for a man that should do nothing but eat, and sit at Table from morning till night, which the Prophet condemns in these words, *Va va qui Consurgitis mane ad ebrietatem secundam, & potandum usque ad vespere.*

'Tis not hard to see that it is not less abusing the life which God hath given us to serve him, to spend it totally in that

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which is called Divertisement; seeing that the word it self tels us, that we ought to seek it but to divert our selves, and withdraw us from thoughts, and laborious occupations, which cause in the Soul a kind of weariness, which we have need to repair.

This is sufficient to condemn the most part of those who go to Plays; For it is clear, that they go not thither to ease the mind of serious occupations, being that these people, and particularly worldly Women, hardly ever employ or busy themselves seriously. Their Life is nothing but a vicissitude of divertisements, which they pass away in Visits, in Game, in going to Balls and Masques; in Walking, in Feasting and in Plays. What if they be vexed, as they often are, 'tis because they have too much divertisement, and too little serious employments? Their vexation is a dislike of plenty and satiety, like to that of those who have eaten too much; and it ought to be cured by abstinence, and not by the alteration and change of pleasures. They ought to divert themselves in being busy, for that laziness and idleness, are the chief cause of their vexation.

22. From hence it follows, that all those who have no need of divertisement, that is to say, the most part of those who go to Plays, cannot do it without sinning; tho' there should be no other reason to believe them forbidden. But it follows not, that those who have truly need to recreate the mind, can go thither without sin, because Plays cannot pass for a Divertisement, not being able to work the effect, which is allowed to be sought therein. For a Christian can only seek a simple refreshment of mind, which may render him more capacitated to act Christian-like, and according to Christian policy. Now Plays are so far from being assistant thereto, that there is nothing makes the Soul worse disposed, not only to the principal Christian occupations, as Prayer, but to Actions themselves the most common, when one would do them with a Christian mind; that is to say, recollected, and attentive to God, which one ought to endeavour, as much as he can to conserve in the outward actions, Thus as the need we have to eat, allows, not that it is permitted us to eat meats serving only to weaken the body; likewise the need of diverting our

selves cannot excuse those who search after such Divertisements, as only render their mind less proper to act Christian-like.

23. Playes and Romances render not only the mind ill inclined to all actions of Religion, and Piety, but make it have a dislike in some manner of all serious and common actions. As there is nothing represented in them but Courtships, and extraordinary passages, and the discourses of those who speak on the Stages, are far enough removed from those which are used in common; so men take therein insensibly an inclination altogether Romantick; they are stuffed with Princes and Princesses; and chiefly the Women taking pleasure in the respects which is given to those of their Sex; the Image and practice of which, they see in the several Divertisements, wherein the young Gallants pay to them what they have learnt in Romances, and treat them like Nymphs and Goddesses, imprints in such a manner this sort of life in the fancy, that the little affairs of their Huswifery becomes unsupportable to them, and when they return into their Houses, with this evaporated Spirit, and quite fill'd with these follies, they

they find all therein disagreeable; and above all, their Husbands, who being busied about their affairs, are not always in the humour to render them those ridiculous complacencies, which are given to Women in Plays and Romances.

24. The necessity which we have to repair the decay of our bodies by nourishment cannot serve as an excuse for eating voluntary meats, which might imprint a venemous quality, which might trouble the humors, and which might cause therein intemperance, because this kind of nutriment would be contrary to the end, or intent of eating, which is to conserve the life of the body. Thus the need we have sometimes of refreshing our selves, cannot excuse them who esteem Plays a divertisement; seeing that they imprint, as hath already been said, bad qualitys in the mind, that they excite passions, and disorder the Soul.

25. The necessity men have to divert themselves, is much less than they think, and consists more in imagination, or in custom, than in real necessity. Those who are busied in outward labours, need only a simple cessation from their labour. Those who are employ'd in affairs troublesome to the mind, and not

laborious for the body, have need to withdraw themselves from the dissipation which springs naturally from these sorts of employs, and not to disperse themselves yet more by divertisements which bind the mind strongly. 'Tis an absurdity to think, that there is need to spend three hours at a Play, to stuff the mind with fooleries. Men in these days have not their minds made otherwise, than those in the time of *St. Lewis*, who employed his time well when he banished Plays out of his Kingdom. Those who feel in them this need, ought to consider it, not as natural inability, but as a vice gotten by custom, which must be cured by employing themselves seriously. A man who hath laboured sore, is satisfied when he leaves working; and diverts himself in all that doth not busy him. Plays are only necessary for those who divert themselves always, and who endeavour to remedy the dislike, which naturally accompanies the continuation of pleasures. And as this necessity comes only from their evil disposition, which they are obliged to correct, it may be said, that 'tis needful for no man, but that 'tis dangerous to all the world.

26. But there is nothing that shews the danger of Plays better, and how much they are forbid to Christians, than the opposition they have with the principal dispositions in which Christians ought to establish themselves, and to which they ought to tend, altho as yet they may be separated through weakness from their virtue. The First, is continual Prayer, whereof the Apostle gives an express Command in these words; *Sine Intermissione orate. Pray without Intermission*; and Jesus Christ by these, *Vigilate & orate ne Intretis in tentationem. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.* Because temptation being in some sort continual Prayer, the remedy ought to be so likewise. 'Tis true, that this continuation and perseverance in Prayer, cannot consist in a perpetual attention of the mind to God, and that 'tis sufficient that it remain always in a simple desire that God know it: but 'tis certain, that this desire is easily extinguished, if care be not had to nourish it by actual Prayers, and by meditating upon Divine things.

Therefore Christians not being able to lead their whole lives in the act of Prayer, are at least, obliged to renew

it from time to time before God : and as it is by these actual Prayers that they entertain that which ought to be always at the bottom of their heart ; they ought with great care avoid all that may render these Prayers unworthy of being presented before the Divine Majesty, which not only obliges them to fly distractions which happen to them in Prayer, but much more the sources of distractions, which filling the Soul with foolish thoughts, renders it incapable of applying it self to God.

This is sufficient to oblige those who are careful of their Salvation, to fly Plays and Romances, because there is nothing in the world which destroys the Soul more, which renders it more incapable of applying it self to God, or which fills it more with vain fancies. They are strange Prayers which are made coming from these Sights, or from these lectures, having the head filled with all the fooleries which they saw there. Man is not able to procure to himself the Spirit of Prayer, nor this Holy zeal which excites him when God pleaseth, by meditation : *Et in meditatione mea exardescit ignis* ; but the least that can be done, is to put no obstacle by
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doing voluntarily, what is directly opposite to this Spirit.

27. God easily pardons the distractions which spring from the frailty of nature ; but he does not so with those which are voluntary in their sources, such are those which Plays produce; therefore there is reason to fear, that all the Prayers of them who go to Plays, being full of these kind of distractions, are more capable to irritate God, than to appease him, and that they are of the number of those which the Prophet speaks of. *Et oratio ejus fiat in peccatum: Let his Prayer be imputed to sin.* Now if their Prayers which ought to invite the Spirit of God over all the body of their Works, are themselves defiled, what ought men to judge of the rest of their actions? *Silumen quod in te est, tenebrae sunt, ipse tenebrae quantae erunt?*

28. One of these principal parts of Piety, and one of the chief means to conserve it, is to love the word of God, and to place our Consolation therein. 'Tis by the sentiment of sweetness which the Prophet had tasted in this spiritual nutriment, that he said to God, *Inventi sunt sermones tui & Comedi eos, & satium est*

est verbum tuum in gaudium & in lætitationem Cordis mei. I have found thy words, and I have fed my self with them, and they have fill'd my heart with joy and delight. 'Tis this Consolation so Divine which entertains our hopes according to St. Paul, and which maintains us in the crosses of this life. Now experience may make known to all the world, that nothing doth destroy this spiritual Joy, that men resent in the reading the word of God, more than worldly and sensual joys, and principally those of Plays. These two joys are absolutely incompatible; Those who please themselves with Plays, are not so with Truth; and those who take pleasure in Truth, have nothing of satisfaction in those sorts of pleasures. Therefore the same Prophet to whom God hath given this spiritual tast, for his Word witnesseth presently after, that he could not suffer assemblies of Games, and Divertisements; and that he put all his Glory and Joy, to consider the wonderfulness of Gods handy-work: *Non sedi cum concilio ludentium, & gloriolus sum à facie manus tue.* And the Holy King David, who had also tasted the sweetness of the Divine Law, doth witness likewise the contempt it made him conceive

conceive of all vain discourses of worldly men; *Narraverunt mihi Iuqui fabulationes, sed non lex tua.* 'Tis the sentiment which the Holy Ghost inspires into all these to whom he gives a love for his Holy word. All those Diversifications which are so agreeable to those who love the world, are to them an unsavory meat, which they cannot eat, because they see nothing therein but emptiness, naughtiness, vanity, and foolishness, and find therein a want of the salt of Truth and Wisdom; which causeth them to say with Job, that they cannot taste it. *An poterit Comedi Insulsum, quod non est sale Conditum? Ubi poterit be could eat of this meat, which was not seasoned with Salt?*

But on the contrary, if the Soul addict it self to these false pleasures, she presently looses the pleasure of Spiritual ones, and finds only the word of God unsavoury. These are those sower Grapes, whereof the Prophet speaks, which set the Childrens Teeth on edge. *Omnis homo qui Comedit uvam acerbam, obdurescent dentes eius.* That is to say, according to the explication of St. Gregory, That when men feed of the vain joys of the World, the spiritual senses become incapable

incapable of tasting and understanding Heavenly things. *Qui presentis mundi delectatione pascitur, Interni ejus sensus ligantur, ut jam spiritualia mandere & intelligere non valeant.* Now amongst the Delights which extinguish the love of Gods word, It may be said that Plays and Romances are of the first magnitude; because there is nothing more opposite to Truth; and the Spirit of God, as St. Bernard saith, being a Spirit of Truth cannot take part with the vanity of this World. *Sed nec erit ei unquam pars cum mundi vanitate, cum veritatis sit spiritus.*

29. God imputes not to us the coldness which comes from the subtraction of his Lights, or simply from the heaviness of the body; but doubtless, he imputes to us those which by our neglect we have contributed unto. He wills that we esteem nothing so much, as the precious gift he hath made us of his Love; and that we be careful to embrace it in giving it nourishment. 'Tis the Command which he hath given to all Christians, in the persons of the Priests of the antient Law, to whom he orders to maintain always the fire upon the Altar, and to be careful to add every day in the morning wood to it. *Ignis in Altari*

rari semper ardebit, quem nutrit sacerdos, subjiciens mane ligna per singulos dies. This Altar is the heart of Man, and every Christian is the Priest, who ought to have a care to nourish upon the Altar of his heart, the fire of Charity, by putting thereto every day some wood, that is to say, in entertaining it, by meditating of Holy things, and by exercises of Piety. Now if those who go to Plays, have yet any sense of Piety, they must necessarily grant, that they absolutely extinguish and slay Devotion. And thus they ought not to question, but God will judge them culpable; for having made so little account of his Love, that instead of nourishing, and of endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguish it by their vain and foolish diversions; and that he will impute to them as a great sin this coldness, or the loss of their Charity. For if the dissipation of worldly Goods, and of terrestrial Gold by Play, and by Excess, be not a small sin; what ought men to think of the dissipation of the Goods of Grace, and of this inflamed Gold the Scripture speaks of, which we ought to buy at the loss of all the Goods, and all the pleasures of this life?

30. The Fathers blame as a dangerous rashness, the conduct of those who being not as yet grounded in the love of God, employ themselves with too much eagerness in outward good Works, under pretence of Charity; because it is difficult that the mind be not much dissipated in these exercises: *In terrenis quippe actibus*, saith St. Gregory, *valde frigescit animus, si necdum fuerit per Intima dona solidatus.* If the Soul be not fortified in the inward life by Grace, she becomes very cold, in terrestrial, and worldly employments. What judgment would he have made then of those, who being yet weaker, do nevertheless make no difficulty of going to Plays, which dissipate the mind more than the greatest employments, and can be excused neither by Charity nor by Zeal; being that men seek therein only pleasure.

31. No man doubtless would approve that a *Carthusian* should go to Plays, because all the world sees the great disproportion of this divertisement with the Holy Life he professeth. But we are not struck, that many Christians make little or no difficulty of going thither, because we know not the Holyness to which they are obliged by the vow of their

their Baptism. We consider not, as *S. Paulinus* saith, that by the grace of this Sacrament they have been buried with *Jesus Christ*, that they have promised to embrace his Cross; to live no more for themselves nor the World; but that *Jesus Christ* may live in them. We consider that a Christian life ought not only to be an imitation, but a continuation of the life of *Jesus Christ*; since that 'tis his Spirit which ought to act in them, and by them, by imprinting in their hearts the same sentiments which it hath in that of *Jesus Christ*. If we did observe a Christian life by this means, we should soon know how much Plays are opposite thereto, and there would need no reasons to convince those who would be perswaded of the Capital Truths of our Religion, as there needs none to convince a *Cambusian*, instructed in his Order, that these diversions so prophane are forbidden him.

22. All our actions are due to *Jesus Christ*, not only as to our God, but as to him who hath redeemed us at the price of his dearest Blood, to oblige us to glorify him in all our works, as *St. Paul* saith. All our actions must relate to his Glory, and must witness, that

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we will imitate Jesus Christ crucified; that we love what he hath loved, and hate what he hath hated. And as he is the beginning of all good Works, and that the Grace by which we do them, is the fruit of the Cross; we ought to thank him for all those, which his Spirit hath made us do. Lastly, we ought to say truly, that we do them for him, and by his Love. Now would it not be to scoff at God and Man, to say that we go to Plays for the love of Jesus Christ? should we dare to offer him this action, and tell him, Lord, 'tis in obedience to thee that I will go to Plays; it will be thy Spirit which will guide me thither; it will be thee who shall be the principal of this action; 'tis by the Cross that thou hast made me deserve it? Is there any one so blind or stubborn, who can suffer without horror, the impiety of this Language? and even those who labour the most to justify Plays, have they ever dared to offer this action to God? Have they ever thought to give thanks to God for having assisted thereunto? Is not this an evident proof that their Consciences belye their false Lights; and that they themselves are convinced from the bottom of their hearts,

hearts, of the harm there is in Playes, although they endeavour to dissemble it by the weak reasons, which their wits furnish them with? For every action which we should not dare to offer to God, every action, whereof Jesus Christ is not the principal; every action which we cannot do to obey him; every action which cannot be the fruit and effect of his Cross; In Fine, every action which we dare not not thank him for, may not be good, nor permitted a Christian.

33. If a Christian consider himself as a sinner, he ought to acknowledge that there is nothing more contrary to that state which obliges him to Penance, Tears, and to avoid unprofitable pleasures, than the hunting after such vain and foolish recreations, and so dangerous as Plays. If he consider himself as a Child of God, as a member of Jesus Christ, illuminated by his Truth, enriched by his Graces, nourished with his Body, Heir of his Kingdom; he ought to judge that there is nothing more unworthy so high a quality, as the taking delight in these foolish pleasures of the Children of the World.

34. The Soul cannot conserve a true Piety, without the assistance of a wholesome fear, which she conceives at the sight of dangers, wherewith she is environed. She cannot be ignorant of the power and malice of her enemies, who go round seeking how to devour her, as the Scripture speaks. She knows, as *St. Paulinus* saith, that all corporal creatures, which draw our Hearts by the means of our Eyes, are so many Nets, which the Devil makes use of to catch us in; so many Swords wherewith he endeavours to run us to the Heart. She knows that she marches in the midst of her enemies, and of a thousand snares, and that she walks there without Light, or Strength; because she sees only darkness in her understanding, only weakness in her Will, and rebellion in her Senses. The experience of so many Souls which loose themselves by their sight, and the general disorder which reigns every where, makes her know that there is nothing so rare as Christian virtue; nothing so easy as to loose ones self; nothing so difficult as to be saved. How then can she joyn with so just a fear of terrible evils, which threaten her, the vain rejoycing of the world, and

and feed her mind with Chimeras, which Plays stuff it with all? Is it not visible that as the natural effects of Plays are to stifle this so wholsom fear? also the effect of this fear, ought to be to stifle the desire of unprofitable, and prophane recreations, and to make her conclude, that she hath many other things to think of in this world, than going to Plays: that the time God bestows on her, is too precious to be lost unfortunately in these vain amusements; so that when she gives her self over thereunto, it must needs be, that she is blind, that she hath lost the remembrance of her dangers, and that she hath stifled in this manner, that disposition, by which the Holy Spirit enters into the heart, and is entertained there whilst it remains therein.

35. One of the first effects of the Light of Grace, is to discover to the Soul, the emptiness, the meanness, and the Instability of all worldly things, which slide and vanish away like fancies, and to make it see at the same time, the grandeur and solidity of Eternal Goods. And this disposition produceth of it self a peculiar aversion for Plays, because it perceives there-
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in an emptiness and meanness altogether peculiar. For if all temporal things be nothing but Figures, and Shadows, in what rank ought Plays to be put, which are only the Shadows of Shadows, seeing that they are nothing but the vain Images of temporal things, and oftentimes false things also?

36. Sin hath open'd the eyes, to make men see with pleasure the vanities of this world: and Grace in opening the Eyes of the Soul for the things of God, shuts them to worldly things; through a blindness, much more fortunate than that miserable sight which sin hath procured us. 'Tis this wholesome blindness, saith *St. Paulinus* which the Prophet begg'd of God; when he said, *Hinder my eyes from seeing vanity.* And which our Lord prefers before the clear seeing eyes of the Jews, when he told them, *Si ceci essetis non haberetis peccatum.* If yewere blind, ye should have no sin.

If then we are obliged in quality of Christians, to beg of God, that he will take away our Eyes from all worldly follies, of which, Plays are as it were a Compendium, and imprint in us a hatred, and an aversion for them
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in the Heart; How can we think that we shall be able to satisfy our eyes with these vain sights, and to place our Satisfaction and Content, in [what ought to be the object of our aversion and horror.

The



The Fifth Treatise.

Of Reports.

I.



E scarcely see any one who does not complain of the Reports which are made of him, and who pretends not that others violate, in regard of him the Rules of Honesty and Justice. And as these sorts of complaints have not only a place in the world, but amongst persons of Piety and in Societies, the most orderly. It seems, that we have right to conclude from thence, that the Rules by which we ought to judge of the equity and necessity of Reports, are not known well enough. In the mean time we may say, that there is hardly any thing more important

important, than to clear them, seeing that indiscreet reports are the most common cause of troubles and divisions, which happen not only in particular Friendships, but also in Societies, and even in whole Kingdoms, and that 'tis difficult that we do not commit many Faults if we be not well instructed what ought to be done to avoid them.

2. What is strange, is that every man complaining of others upon this point, no man thinks he gives cause to others to complain of him. He saw enough thereof, who said of others, That they are people who Conster all things wrong, who report them so, who waite and poyson the most innocent and the most harmless Discourses, who have neither Fidelity nor Secrecy: But we see not therein who attribute these faults to themselves, and who believe they want neither Sincerity nor Honesty. Finally each would observe this Law willingly, that it might be permitted him to tell all that he would of other mens Discourses, and that it might not be allowed any one to report any thing of his.

But as all the World pretending to this Priviledge, no man obtains it indeed,
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it must make account that all things will go always almost alike, and that the world will always follow its fancies and passions, that there will always be found people who will suffer themselves to report what they shall think fit, and thus they need only to be mindful to rule themselves, that they may observe in this point, in respect of others, what Honesty, Charity, and Justice demands of us.

3. 'Tis almost the sole real Interest which we may have therein. For provided that we our selves commit not Faults, the indiscretion and wickedness of others can hardly hurt us. They are evil for them, and sometimes for those who give ear to them and believe them, but not for those whom these reports are made of, if they bear them as they ought. God oftentimes makes use of them to procure them considerable Benefits, and thereby to make them prosper by the designs of his Mercy upon them. Thus we have nothing to do but to stand upon our Guard against our selves, and we shall be shelter'd from all the rest.

4. We are so much more obliged thereunto, because unless we be very attentive

tentive to our selves, it is very hard to avoid committing these kind of faults, because direction hath no certain and precise Rules, and because we cannot establish, upon this point, general Maxims. It is not true, that we cannot at some time report what we have heard. It is not true, that 'tis never permitted to tell what may be displeasing to those who have spoken it. It is not true, that it may be allowed to relate all that may be gainsaid without displeasing them. And finally, excepting the Maxim which commands that we relate nothing but Truth, all the rest are not universal Truths, and they must be restrain'd by divers Conditions to make them Just.

5. But 'tis not unprofitable nevertheless to know these Rules, and to have them present, because it behoves us to stick to them, unless we clearly see that we are in the case of exception. Particular reasons to observe the general Laws of secrecy are needless, but there must be very clear and very pressing ones to dispense with them. So that when the least doubt is started we must adhere to the Rule, and not to the Exception. This is the first Maxim which
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ought to be printed in the mind upon this Subject; and will suffice also to mark out to us our Duty in the most part of occurrences. For we are hardly wanting to secrecy, but through a sickleness which makes us pass by all doubts and reasonable scruples, which we perceive formed of our understandings.

6. The general Foundation of the tie which we commonly have to secrecy in regard of what men say to us in the way of discourse is, that God having had in consideration in all his Laws the linking men together, and making them live in a well grounded Society, all that destroys this Society ought to be esteemed as wicked and pernicious. Now it is manifest that 'twould be impossible that this Society should subsist, if men were in a continual defiance of one another, if they looked upon one another as Enemies, and if they thought they might not communicate their intentions to whomsoever it were, with security. 'Tis a Torment the Common people cannot endure, as being always upon the reserve to say nothing that may be ill taken. This inconvenience cannot absolutely be avoided, because minds being different, what one

one man thinks good, another often times takes it in the contrary sense. There are elsewhere a thousand things which have nothing of bad, being said in particular, and which we cannot nevertheless tell again without imprudence and danger ; so that if those to whom we speak, think that they have reason to relate all that men tell them, there is almost no entertainment from whence we ought not to fear bad effects.

7. Also let us not presume to speak to people with confidence, but in supposing them in another disposition, and imagining that they have some fidelity and secrecy, and as every one may judge what they expect and what they reckon upon that, It may be said that we engage our selves therein by giving ear to what others say to us that they were promised Secrecy, and thus we are obliged to be upon our guard, not only through consideration of common profit, but by vertue of this Covenant and this secret Promise. If we had not a design to oblige them thereby, that should be declared, and we ought to act in such sort that they may have no reason to expect it ; because it is reasonable that those who will not observe the common

Laws which are received amongst men, do at least give notice to others of their resolution, that we may not take them for that which indeed they are not.

8. 'Tis for this reason that we cannot blame the Rule and Government observed in Monasteries, which is to relate all to the Superior they hear said ill of those who live there. For persons chosen and tryed may well renounce all the entertainments of Confidence, and the rule which obliges to these relations being known by all, each one is sufficiently advertised to say nothing but what he desires may be told again: After which those who run the hazard of it ought to complain of themselves, not of those who do nothing but what ought to be judged they should do. But as the same Law is not establish'd in the world, and that it would be also a fault to establish it therein, those who are wanting in what may lawfully be expected from them, do undoubtedly wrong Honesty and Justice, and 'tis enough to judge them guilty of infidelity, that they have not spoken to them with freedom, but upon consideration that they would not have abused it at all, but would have kept secret what could not be

be told again without injuring the Party who said it.

9. There are some who never miss, when they will that a thing be not told again, to require absolutely the secret. And this is not a bad Custome, because that applies more the imagination of those to whom we speak, and frees them from the trouble of distinguishing whether they could or could not relate what was told them, seeing that after the expresse promise there is no more to deliberate upon. But moreover as this prevention would be very troublesome in a long discourse, and that there are some who would be astonished that they should have so little trust in their discretion, it is likewise hard to practice it always, and there should be for that an application which many people are not capable of. It is requisit then that the natural secret supply the defect of an expresse engagement, there being no other difference betwixt natural obligation to a secret, and that which comes from an expresse promise; only in the last we leave it not to him we engage in the freedom of distinguishing whether he can or cannot relate what was told to him; whereas in the other we remit

it to the discretion of him whom we speak to, and imagine that he hath so much interest as not to tell what he shall conclude prejudicial to him from whom he learnt what he knows. But the obligation is alike in the one and in the other; and in one sense it may be said that a truly honest man ought to think himself so much more obliged to secrecy, by how less cautious he hath been with him, and hath more relied upon his discretion, and his fidelity.

10. 'Tis but considering the bottom of the heart to grant the justness of this Law. For who is he who would not that others should practice it to him? Who is it that would not be glad to find in them this Fidelity, and complain of those who want it? It follows then by the general rule of natural equity, That each man is obliged to practice this fidelity towards others. There needs not for this express Promises and Compacts; The fear of this natural Law is greater then that of all promises and Compacts; and it may be said even that this promise is found there, and that 'tis that is observed by all those ordinary Civilities which are rendred to people in the World. For if these Civilities,

ties be sincere as they ought to be, they signifie at least that we are not Enemies to those to whom we pay them, that we have no design of harming them, and that we are disposed to practice, in respect of them, the Obligations of Honesty and common Civility. Now the least respect we can pay them is not to abuse, to their prejudice, what they shall have told us.

11. The right of a Pawn hath always been sacred amongst men, and they have always esteemed it an Injustice to violate it without an excess Baseness and Perfidiousness. Nevertheless it is not needful that he who trusts a business of concern to another, take assurance for his faithfulness. He is engaged sufficiently to it in receiving it. Now what is it that man does, in a particular discourse, but render him whom he speaks to, depositor of his thoughts, which he trusts him withall? Let it be then, that he require expressly the secret, or that he do not, 'tis always the Pawn, which we ought to believe cannot be disposed, but according to the intentions of him who hath trusted it.

12. There are men enough who think themselves obliged to this Fidelity to-

wards their Friends, but there are very few who extend this obligation to persons either indifferent, or Enemies. Thus men think they are out of reproach, as to Reports, when they may say they have no Obligation to those whom they concern, nor any engagement to advise them. But these excuses come only from a base *Idea* we have of Charity. A true Christian is not only no mans Enemy because he loves all men, but he loves them all equally, according to St. *Augustine*, in wishing them all equally happiness. What though they shew more kindness to some than to others, 'tis because the outward effects of Friendship being limited, they owe them particularly to those to whom the Providence of God hath associated with him. 'Tis not then affection that he wants when he shews it not outwardly; 'tis this association. Now from the time that men enter into talk with some one by particular discourse, the Providence applies us to him in giving us the means to practice Charity in its proper place, and by consequence we are obliged to use him like a Friend, which at least includes the Obligation not to abuse his Confidence.

13. But must we extend the secret to those also who have violated it first by indiscreet Reports, and who shall have abused, through Malice and Imprudence, the confidence which we have testified to them? Do not they take away the right of requiring from others by this means, what they themselves have not observed? It seems at first, the first sentiment conducts us thither; but if examined more strictly, we shall find that it is rather a motive of indignation, than of Justice: because, what would friendship be, if each one thought himself in the right of making a Magazine of all that should slip from his friends to injure them, in case they happen to fail in their Duties? Also *St. Austin* observes equally amongst the qualities of a man of worth, never to discover what hath been put in trust to him, and never to do any thing that he fears maybe discovered. *Aliena peccata sibi Commissa Atq. non produnt, que prodi timeant, ipsi Ep. 5. nulla Committant.* We ought not therefore to suffer our Duty to depend upon anothers, nor commit Infidelities, because another does so. If a slight and unfaithful friend deserve not that we manage him by his present state and

condition, he deserves it by his past state. Secrecy is a debt of that time; and as the engagement was not at all conditional, it subsists even when friendship ceaseth: so that we should not forbear to continue Debtor to a fickle and inconstant friend, if after having borrowed Money of us, he chance to break with us.

14. Now what hath been said of friendship, may be said of the transitory Confidence, which we take in some, in disclosing to them things which we would not have known. For this Confidence or Trust is a sort of friendship, which tho not so strong, nor lasting, ought to be regulated yet by the same principles. We ought to love all men, as we have said already, and this general love becomes friendship, being joyned with familiarity. Thus a familiarity of many years, is a friendship of many years; and a familiarity of one day, is a friendship of one day. So that as every friendship doth oblige Secrecy, touching what is said in the time of friendship, friends of one day, or one hour, are obliged to preserve the secret of all things committed to their Trust, during that day or hour, and the perfecti-
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ness of the one, can no way excuse that of the other.

15. Hitherto I have not pretended to establish any thing, but the general rule, which consists in judging of what we ought to keep secret, and what we may discover by the consent and approbation of those from whom we had learnt them, as far as this consent, and approbation is known to us. It is true nevertheless, that this rule admits of divers exceptions, but being seldom met withal in practice, do no way destroy the usefulness of the rule. 'Tis for example, an indubitable exception to this Law of Secresie; when any body communicates to us a criminal design, which we may hinder by discovering it. For we are so far from hurting civil Society, in not keeping it secret, that we should destroy it by keeping it. Crimes are not matter of Trust, and the commerce of discourse is not ordain'd to communicate evil designs one to another. Thus 'tis he who makes these detestable overtures, that abuses this chief tie of Society; and those who tell again these wicked discourses, that they may hinder the bad effects of them, make good use of the indiscretion

tion of those from whom they slip.

16. We ought to say the same of certain Vices, pernicious to human Society, and dangerous for certain persons. For if it happen that men out of confidence discover them to us in discourse, and that afterwards they would engage themselves in employments, whereof these vices render them incapable, those to whom they have discovered themselves are not wanting to secrecy, if they avoid these unfortunate engagements by discovering what they know of those persons. I know by the declaration of a man, that he hath bad thoughts of Religion, and nevertheless I see him ready to enter into an Ecclesiastical State. 'Tis so far from being a fault to give notice to those who can hinder him, that it would be a greater not to do it.

17. Finally one may yet except perchance from the Law of Secrecy, certain occasions wherein men discover in discourse; designs and pretences, which tho not expressly wicked, are yet contrary to other pretences, and other designs, which we think *bona fide* more legitimate, and which we are more obliged to favour; provided that this obligation

Agation be so clear, that he who hath discovered himself rashly, may be convinc'd himself of it. For this disposition whereby he may know what we are, ought to suffice to advise him not to lay himself open to us; and his inconstancy having perswaded him to do it, it appears not absolutely unjust, that we profit by his imprudence, to sustain what we take for a greater good. But it is easy to see, that this case is very rare; and that it does not make thus a considerable exception from the Law of Secrecy.

18. Those who have some Conscience, or make profession to have any, do not forbear to colour with some pretence of usefulness, the reports they make of others, and think thereby to be exempt from all reproach of infidelity, when they have no engagement at all to silence. But to keep themselves from this Illusion, they must consider that all profit is not sufficient to justify these Reports. It must be great, certain, that we cannot procure it by any other way. For 'tis a real inconvenience only to be wanting in the confidence they have had of us. 'Tis a source of disunion, and 'tis to deprive ones self of

of the means to serve those who injoin it. 'Tis to banish the overture of the Commerce of Discourse. Lastly, 'tis to injure human Society, by filling it with distrust and suspicions. Thus the wrong ought at the least to be recompenced by some certain and considerable profit.

19. Whosoever therefore feels himself thrust forward to report what he knows not, but by particular discourse, ought to examine all the following conditions; whether the thing which he is about to do, be very certain, and whether he hath not been mistaken in the Idea he hath conceived thereof; whether it is so constantly bad, that he hath no reason to doubt of it; whether it is important that it be known to avoid some great inconveniency; whether this inconveniency may not be avoided by some other means. Whether he have practised towards him who is interessed all the means prescribed by the Gospel to correct him. And if all these conditions happening, he be inclined to discover it afterwards, it ought to be precisely only to those who can give order therein, and not to those to whom these reports would only serve to satisfy their curiosity,

curiosity, or irritate their malignity.

20. We shall be easily convinced of the extream circumspection that ought to be had in these Reports; if we make reflexion on the consequences, and terrible indiscretions which may be committed. For as soon as any report is rashly escaped from us, we are no more the master of it. It multiplies and increases, and dilates it self mightily; It serves as an instrument to the passion of some, and as a nourishment to others, it produces oftentimes disagreements, and durable, and permanent animosities, which have long and troublesome consequences. It engages an infinity of people in considerable faults: and all this multiplication of sins shall be imputed to those who shall have given way thereunto by their indiscretion.

21. I have hitherto only considered the obligations to any secret thing which springs from the common interest of civil Society and Fidelity, which is a continuation of that transitory friendship, which is contracted with all those who out of confidence speak to us: And thus I have taken their Will for the rule of Reports, which may honestly be made from what shall have been told us. But
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as from hence it would follow, that one might tell again all that they should be glad we should tell; it may be added, that we are often obliged to Secrecy, by the general rule of Charity, which forbids the reporting many things; altho those who have said them, should not think themselves obliged to it: for we ought not only to have respect to their Will, but also to their good, and to the good of others. It ought to satisfy us, that we know that some report may really hurt some one to publish it. In a word, we must regulate our Reports, not by what people desire in their passions, but by what they ought to desire, therein having a reason to suppose, that when their passion shall cease, they will be glad that they had managed them so: and when this passion shall not cease, we ought not to make our selves the ministers to do hurt to others, or to our selves.

22. Thus a man of worth will never fall into this fault, which *St. Austin* calls *A horrible Plague*, to report to those who are angry against others, the words of animosity which these persons might have said against them; and he will follow without trouble this maxim of that

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holy Doctor, That 'tis not enough for a man truly Charitable not to excite or augment, by his reports, the enmities of men, but that he ought also to labour with his whole strength to extinguish and stifle them. *Animo humano parum esse debet Inimicitias hominum nec excitare nec augere male loquendo, nisi eas etiam extinguere bene loquendo studuerit.*

23. A man, by following these Rules, avoids one part of the faults which he commits in relating indiscreetly what he only knows by some particular Discourses. But that is not the only fault which he is obliged to be careful of upon this Subject; That of believing lightly the faults which others tell us, is of no less importance, and it may be said that 'tis yet more dangerous, because we are less watchful on that side, and we suffer ourselves so much more easily to fall thereinto, by how much it appears that we have no concern for it. We think that it belongs to him who relates something, to give an Answer, and that we may rely upon him for the truth of the deed which he relates. In the mean time it is quite otherwise: For the Soul of that Man who hearkeneth, remains not without action; she thinketh, judgeth, followeth her

her Passions, acts also often times in following her Passions, and if she have not had cause to yeild to these reports, those Judgments are false, those Passions unjust, and those actions disorderly.

24. To comprehend, as to this point, the injustice and the averfness of most mens minds, we need only consider that when they are Cloathed with certain Ornaments, which the Order of this World hath assigned to Judges being assembled in a certain place, and things are proposed and treated of in certain Forms or Methods, they act ordinarily after a discreet, wise, and equitable manner. The discourses of the one Party make no Impressions upon their Souls, unless they know what the other side hath to Answer to it. They examine scrupulously the Proofs; they reject those which are false and uncertain; they give leave to weaken the depositions of Witnesses; they stop only at those which are not destroyed by reasonable disproofs, and they never declare a man guilty of a Crime which is imputed to him, unless he be absolutely convicted of it. The sole defect of Proofs sufficeth them to absolve the accused, and to condemn the Accuser; and when they want any of these

these forms, they condemn themselves of Temerity and Injustice. But when moved to judge of some one in particular without Power or Authority, they act clear another way. All Proofs suffice them, every Authority serves their turn, every Witness is kindly received; and upon the bare report of Persons either prejudiced, or ill informed, or wavering and without judgment, they will declare, without any scruple, people guilty of all that others shall have been willing to lay to their Charge.

25. Perhaps men will say that 'tis impossible to use in particular judgments all the formalities of solemn judgments. But if men observe not the Garb and the Pomp, they ought at least to observe therein what is necessary to assure themselves of the truth. Now it is no less necessary to form the Judgment and understanding in particular, to know what each Party saith, then to pass juridical Sentences of it. That which a passionate, inconsiderate, and unconstant Witness reports in a Discourse, deserves no more belief then what he deposeth before a Judge, and he deserves even less, because the Oaths which the Judges draw from them do much more applie people

ple, who have any Conscience or Honour, to say nothing that's false. A false and uncertain Proof is absolutely false and uncertain. Nevertheless those who would make a Conscience of Judging upon the Bench, on Proofs and Witnesses of this nature, make none at all oftentimes of Condemning people in particular upon very weak Proofs, and Witnesses yet less received.

26. Doubtless there is nothing more unreasonable then this unequal dealing; but it hath a very effective cause in the Corruption of mens hearts. If they shew some equity in publick Judgments, 'tis not because they really love Justice, they would love it every where, if they loved it truly; but on the one part 'tis because the Forms to which they are bound hinders them from going aside, and that on the other, the faults which they commit in publick would not remain absolutely unpunished, and would at least be revenged by the outcry they would bring upon them, if they were not Chastised by the superior Judges. There is nothing of that in the Judgments which we make in secret, upon the reports men make us. There is neither Form to be observed, nor Infamy to be feared.

feared. Thus as we have an entire liberty to follow the propensity of nature, we follow it; and this propensity carries us to receive without examination, all that men have related to the disadvantage of our neighbour; because we naturally love to jeer at others, to scorn them, and to see them humbled; And on the contrary, we fear the suspension, the reservedness, and the attention which hath always something of tormenting, and laborious, which makes us rather judge at hap-hazard, than take so much pains to judge well.

27. It is enough to have some Idea, and some love for equity to condemn this conduct. But lest, that taking the same resolution of judging advisedly of Reports which are made to us, and not believing any which be not clad with circumstances, which may make it entirely certain, we permit our selves nevertheless to be deceived thereby, by taking that for certain, which indeed is not so; It is good to reflect upon the quantity of Reports, which we daily observe, which appearing certain and undoubtful, are not yet at least found very false. Who, for example, would not believe the testimony of a sincere man, who saith
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that he hath learnt such and such a thing, from such an ones proper mouth? Nevertheless, there happens daily differences amongst sincere persons, wherein one maintains, that he hath not said what the other affirms he hath heard; without any reason of suspecting either the one or the other, of falshood or knavery. This may happen a thousand ways, which might easily be discover'd if we would but give attention thereunto. We correct at every turn, the equivocations which slip from our pens, in what we write, for fear they should carry or bear false sense in other mens minds, about what is proposed to them, and the false consequences they may bring with them: and by the help thereof, we avoid always that what we write be not ill taken and misconstrued; and that we be not obliged to long Illustrations. What mistakes may then follow in transitory discourses, made without any care, application, or precaution, wherein we only express most things imperfectly; oftentimes referring them to the Intelligence of those we speak unto? And who can wonder if they be sometimes taken in a wrong sense, so that the one thinks he understands what the other

other never pretended to have spoken.

28. The sense and meaning of our expressions, is not absolutely included in the terms which we make use of to express our selves ; it depends sometimes of the preceding discourses. A Tone, an Inflection, a Behaviour, an Air alters the signification, and often it depends of thoughts which we imagine in those to whom speak : so that if the want of attention, make them take less care of this Consequence, this Tone, and this Air, or if we be deceived in attributing to them certain thoughts which they had not, and which yet made part of the sense, they deceive themselves almost necessarily in the understanding of what was said to them, and conceive quite another sense, than that which we would have them to conceive.

29. There springs from thence yet another mistake more surprising. 'Tis that as the Soul is not accustomed to conceive these things by the help of words, every time that men take what is told them in a contrary sense, this false impression is painted in their false imagination, with some certain terms, whereby they borrow some part from those

those who speak, and they themselves furnish the other part thereof. But in the end, the remembrance of what they have added, slipping out of their minds, and not distinguishing what they have heard from what came from them, they attribute in good earnest to him, who hath entertain'd them with all the words which denote the false impression they have conceived, because they find it in their mind, clad with those words.

20. There are some likewise who reciting the discourses they have had with any one, and not remembring exactly some things, make them speak according to the remembrance which they have left them. But if one asked them then, if they be certain of what they relate, they would say no, and that they would not be vouchers. But in the conclusion, they come to quit their doubt, and to be assured that they have none in a very pleasant manner. For in making these rehearsals, they imprint them strongly in their memories; and on the contrary, they forget this disposition of distrust, and uncertainty, with which they had made them at first; so that they think in conclusion, that this remembrance is an effect of the things themselves, whereas they

they came from the frequent repetition they have made of them.

31. It is therefore just, when we accuse any one for having said something which may fall upon him or some other, to inform our selves before hand, that is, before we give credit to this report, whether those it concerns be agreed of it, and when we know that they disallow it, Judgement must be suspended, and enquiry made into the circumstances of the Report, how to determine on one side or another. For it is sometimes more probable, that he to whom we attribute the thing hath said it, and sometimes that he hath not. When for example, one busieth himself about a discourse, which notes something of an opinion, if he who disavows it, declares that not only he never held such a discourse, but that he is not, nor never hath been of this sentiment; his testimony is infinitely more credible, than the report of those who should pretend to have heard this discourse from him. For a sentiment is a thing which remains, in regard of which we can scarcely be deceived, whereas it is very easy to take other mens words in a wrong sense, and not be persuaded in this manner, to

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have heard what he hath never said.

32. We should never have done, if we should report by piece-meals, all the ways whereby we may be deceived in the intelligence of what is told us. 'Tis sufficient that we be perswaded in general, that there are many, and that thus, not only in the differences wherein the one affirms he hath not said what another lays to his charge; but also in all reports which are made us, which are not absolutely certain; we must hinder the mind from resolving out of hand, and stop the motives, which are the consequences and marks of belief. By this means we shall not participate at all of other mens faults. We shall not enter into their passions. If we apprehend some suspicion of the conduct of those, whom we understand have drawn a Picture very disadvantageous, we shall not form an expresse judgment thereof, wherein the greatest ill that these discourses can do us, consists. Lastly, we shall always be so much more disposed to clear them, by how much we shall not have resolved concerning them.

33. There remains only one passage, by which Reports can hurt us. 'Tis when we our selves are the cause of it; and
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that people whom we shall have entertained confidently, attribute to us afterwards, discourses, either ridiculous or imprudent, which of it self is able to exasperate us against them, who make or believe these Reports. It is much more necessary to be prepared to behave our selves like Christians in these rencounters, than 'tis to pretend that we can leave them absolutely. For how circumspect soever we may be of those we talk with, we are often deceived in the quality of their minds, and yet more in the disposition of their hearts. 'Tis likewise an effect of goodness to be deceived therein, and not easily to conceive suspicions of mens fidelity. It is moreover impossible to foresee all the ways, whereby false Spirits may abuse our words, and all the false Idea's which they may form by this strange mixture of their imaginations with our thoughts. We should then renounce entirely mens company, if we would not expose our selves to these inconveniences, and as that is neither possible nor profitable to all the world, we must be content to avoid them as much as we can, and resolve to bear them with patience, when we are not so happy as to avoid them.

34. If it happens then, that we fall thereinto, however it be, the first care and application we ought to have, is to hinder, that other mens faults be not to us an occasion of doing it on our side; and to beware also, that in complaining, that they have done us some injustice, it be not our selves who have offered it to them. For we know not what is imputed to them, for having said of us, because others have reported it. Now as they may have altered our words in relating them unto others, we may also have altered theirs, in relating them to our selves. We must then at least be well assured of the fact before we complain thereof, and 'tis wherein we ordinarily miss, because we rather follow the impressions of passion, which is stirr'd by the meer Image of the offence, whether true or false; then the light of reason which is regulated by evidence and conviction.

35. We owe them the same justice, and the same reservedness when they endeavour to judge of the motives, which they might have had in making these Reports. Some are worse then others, and it is not just to attribute without reason, the worst to them. It may be,
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what our spite makes us take for an effect of hatred, disdain, and jealousy, is nothing but the effect of Inconstancy, Indiscretion, Prevention, and of a mistaken Conscience, and of a desire of diverting our selves. Let us have a care therefore, that our passions go no further, than our sight; and let us not imagine without reason, that we cannot be deceived in earnest to our disadvantage.

36.

Likewise we must not be unmindful upon these occasions, to demand justice of our selves against our selves, of all discourses, of all rash, inconstant, indiscreet, and of all wicked Judgments, which we have made of others; or pardon the mind for all evil effects, that they may have produced in their heart, whereof we may judge better at that time, by our own proper judgment; and as we know not, what God imputes to us yet, nor what remains thereof to pay to his Justice; we ought to be ravish'd that he hath given us means to obtain pardon for them by suffering some small injustice, upon the account of others.

37. Afterwards we must consider closely these reports and these noises which incommode us, being careful not to give them more substance and reality then they have. For oftentimes giving them a Being which they have not, and making them subsist by our imagination, when they are annihilated in that of others, we must not believe that men who busie themselves so little with the most important Objects, yea and the most solid, are of an humour to amuse themselves any long time at reports noised abroad without ground. All these relations have only a transitory course, and having served for discourse, for some days, to idle and lazy persons, they are dissipated and vanish away when they are weary of speaking and talking of them. We have nothing to do then but let them pass, and to slight them as vain whimsies, whereof nothing remains. Although they should subsist for a long time, and that they should make a very durable impression, pitty must be had of those who should conserve it, seeing that 'tis to them rather then to us that 'tis hurtful.

38. But we must not only endeavour to preserve our selyes from the evil that these

these reports may do us, in swaying us to impatience: We must attempt to make them effectively useful; and they would be so doubtless, if we knew how to profit by the instructions which we might draw from thence, For what is there, for example, that can teach us better the vanity of that which men call reputation, then the inconstancy which the Commonalty of the World shew upon these occasions? What Proofs soever a man hath given of a good judgment, we shall not for that be less ready to hearken with pleasure to a ridiculous story, and without ground, which it shall please any one to make of him, provided there be found any cross mind which gives him liberty.

The World is naturally so wicked that it always seconds those who will destroy anothers reputation, and if it hath sometimes an esteem for certain people, 'tis in some sort against its will and in spite of it; so that the World is always glad to be assisted to get rid of this esteem, as of a thing that incommodes it. What is there then more ridiculous, then to feed this vain Smoak, and to make it the end of our actions and labours?

39. As it is necessary that Worldly Goods be intermixed with bitterness, least men should cleave too fast to them, we ought to be glad also that Conversation which is none of the least of these Goods have its disgust; because there is almost nothing to which it is more dangerous to adhere unto. Men receive from it an Infinity of sensible and insensible Wounds; Virtue is often quite lost by it, and we gather together all the corruption which is spread into several minds. All that withholds us then to oblige us to a greater solitude, and to have Communication with few people, is very advantageous to us. Now there is nothing more capable to make us loath the Commerce of this World than to find little Honesty and Faith in most people that we meet therein, and to learn by experience how much it is necessary to be upon our Guard when we are to Treat with those whom we scarcely know. It may be said also that 'tis a happiness to be freed from an ill affected Spirit, and which is capable to abuse what is told it; that we ought to esteem our selves happy when we have notice by some indiscreet report which is raised

sed of us, that we had no more Commerce with it without great necessity.

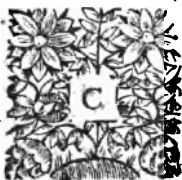
40. Nevertheless we ought not to stretch that Commerce so far as frequently to break with our Friends, when we have cause to impute some indiscretion to them; for we must suffer in them this fault as others. But it ought to be a warning to us continually to behave our selves better in respect of them, not to injure our selves, and to be more upon our Guard; and by this means persons who are neither Trusty nor Faithful will become oftentimes the most useful, by obliging us to apply our selves to be more cautious of our words, and to avoid all that may give them occasion to abuse them.



The Sixth Treatise.

Of the Remedies against Suspitions.

1.



Harity carries us not towards God and our Neighbour, but in some manner towards it self. I do this, saith *St. Austin*, By the love of your love; *Amore tui amoris facio istud*: And 'tis in the same sense that the Kingly Prophet said in one of his, *Psalms*, My Soul hath earnestly coveted to desire your justifications. *Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas*. He did not only desire to accomplish the Law of God, which he understands by the word Justifications, but he also desired the desire of it. One desire produced another, because 'tis impossible that we love any one, but we must

must love also the Love which we bear him, desire to increase it, and fear the diminution and decay of it.

'Tis then a necessary effect of a true and sincere Love for our neighbor to make us fear all that may slacken this Love. All the Clouds which obscure never so little the luster of Charity, are hurtful to it. All that hinders it from publishing it self freely, afflicts it; and it tends always to have a free course to its motions, and to dissipate all the obstacles which may hinder, stop, or trouble them.

Now there is nothing occasions this bad effect, more than the disadvantageous impressions we conceive of our neighbors, either upon Reports from others, or from the Idea's we form of them our selves. And consequently there's nothing Charity ought to be more vigilant of.

2. These Impressions are capable of weakening Charity many ways. What care soever we take not to judge at all; these Impressions nevertheless give us an inclination thereto; for they are the effects of suspicions, and suspicions dispose to Judgments: and if these Judgments be rash, they may not only hurt, but even blot out Charity, because rash Judgments may

may be, according to *St. Thomas*, mortal sins. Thus, although these Impressions be not yet formed Diseases, we ought nevertheless to take them for fore-runners, and presages of a menacing sickness. They are like the first Fits of a dangerous Fever which is like to follow, except it be prevented by remedies, which Christian prudence may furnish us with.

3. These Impressions make us suspect the good it self which we see in others, and hinder also from partaking of it, both by the joy we ought to be sensible of, and by the thanks which it is just we should render to God, which is a very great evil. For God distributing his Graces to divers members, which compose the Body of his Son, which is the Church, and not giving it all to all, he will nevertheless that they become all common to them by Joy and by Thanks, which renders them all partakers of them. No man can say, that his proper Graces and Favours are sufficient without those of others, which made *David* say, *Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te, & confitentium mandata tua.*

4. These Impressions dispose men insensibly to take ill some words or actions
of

of themselves innocent, and wherewith we should not have been troubled, if the mind had not been already prepossessed with some suspicion. One Impression becomes the source of another, and what is worse, we are almost never aware of it; because we never ascend to the first foundation, which is a rashness of the first impression.

5. As they stop the course of our Charity towards those of whom we harbour these disadvantageous opinions, they often produce the same effect in their hearts, because we oftentimes suppress them not so clearly, as that they perceive them not. Our backwardness therein produces the like in them, which God imputes to us, in respect of the occasion we have given thereof. Thus we are insensibly separated from one another, and if there remain yet some Charity, 'tis so disguised, and hid by the Clouds of suspicions, that it remains without action.

6. We must therefore shun these Impressions as much as we can. This is the conclusion whereto Reason leads us. But we cannot always; For there are some Impressions grounded upon such evidence, that 'tis not possible to defend our selves from them. Likewise, we cannot

cannot establish for a Rule, not to give ear to Reports, disadvantageous to our neighbour. For if they be true, and if they be necessary, or useful, we ought to hearken to them. Now there are some of this nature, when Jesus Christ wills that we take two witnesses of the faults which we desire to correct in our Brethren, he obliges these witnesses to see them, and when he orders to tell them to the Church, he wills the Church to hearken to them. Seeing that he inclines us to lament for the mischiefs of the Church, he pretends not that we should shut up our eyes, that we may not see them; seeing that he wills us to judge of false Prophets by their Works, he supposes that we know them. Finally, seeing that he obliges us to treat with Men, and to vary our Conduct according to their different dispositions, he would gladly, without doubt, that we be not dim-sighted, as to what appears to us thereof, without which, it would be impossible, but that we should fall into these snares men lay for us, which he commands us to avoid in these following words, *Caveat autem ab hominibus.*

7. There is properly then none but false and rash Impressions, which we are obliged

obliged to cast away and destroy. It is enough in regard of the true ones, when contrary or against our neighbors, that we receive them with trouble, and that God see in our hearts, that we should be very glad they might be false; that they serve not as a sustenance to our malignity, but as an object of grief to our Charity, and in a word, if we look upon them in the same manner as our own, the continuation and increase whereof, we do not at all desire:

8. But if this disposition be sincere, it is absolutely necessary that it make us glad when we have means to expunge this Impression, and that we know that we are deceived. 'Tis by this means that we may judge of the bottom of the heart. Because if men, on the contrary, pluck not these opinions from us but with pains; if we feel a secret spight against those who disabuse us, if we have eyes only to see what favours our suspicions, and that we have none for all that discover the uncertainty and falsity of them; tis a sign that we have some connection or tie thereunto, and that far from thinking them a burden, which is troublesome to us, and whereof we would willingly be delivered

delivered, we take a particular pleasure therein; which springs from the depravedness of the heart.

9. Charity demands yet more than this. It makes us not only receive willingly, all that is able to deface or diminish our suspicions, when men offer to undeceive us, but oftentimes obliges us to go even to Truth, and seek of our selves the explanations which we are able to find. For it makes us regard these explanations as a Good, which deserves to be sought after, as the deliverance from evil, and from temptation; And lastly, as a debt of Justice which we ought to practice; Seeing that we all desire that others should practice towards us, this equity of clearing as much as they should be able, the Truth, instead of continuing in the Impressions, and these very disadvantageous, which men shall have given of us.

10. There is nothing more evident than the Justice and the Importance of this Duty. But for all that it is frequently very ill practised. For most part of the world are equally easie to receive Impressions, and neglect to clear themselves of them. Being more apt to suppose them true, than to examine whether.

ther they are so or no, Self-Love ordinarily makes this side be taken; and for that there needs nothing but to suffer the two main springs of mens Rule and Conduct, Idleness and Vanity to act: Idleness hinders us from the care of informing our selves exactly of things, because it is always accompanied with some sort of labour. Vanity fixing us to our opinions, makes us apprehend, being obliged to go from our word, and to acknowledge that we have been inconstant and credulous. 'Tis by this means that the most false impressions become perpetual, and that there are so few that shake them off. When we cannot conserve them absolutely, we conserve always something of them, because we desire to give always self-love that consolation of not having been deceived without some reason. Even those, who through a motive of Conscience, forbear judging absolutely, are more easy to continue in suspense, than to free themselves wholly from it, by an entire explication. For Self-love is not mistaken in this condition: If we condemn not people, we think therefore we are dispensed from justifying them; defending, maintaining, and approving their

their Interest. We weaken by this doubt, the praises men give them ; we obscure the glory of their Virtue, and we keep them in a low condition, in looking upon them as suspected persons.

II. As Charity inspires us with sentiments, quite opposite to those of Self-love, so Charity makes us take a quite different Conduct. And to express in few words, the degrees through which Charity leads us. 1. It causeth us, not to receive these disadvantageous impressions of our neighbour, but by necessity and constraint, 2. It carries us to keep them in their just boundaries, and to avoid taking for certain what is not so. 3. Charity makes us always desire sincerely, that these Impressions be taken from us, and favourably to hear those who undertake to do it. 4. Charity enclines us to embrace with joy, all the ways to make Truth evident, and to free it self clearly of those impressions which hold its motives by a kind of constraint, by keeping nevertheless certain measures prescribed by prudence, not referring them to those who shall have reported these things, and not rendring them odious, by discovering them to be the Authors of those Reports.

12. There are some people who dare not clear themselves of their suspicion, for fear of startling those of whom they conceived them, in opening themselves to them. But there is a great deal of appearance that Self-love hath a greater share than Charity in this reserve. Charity is not so fearful, because it imagines not so easily, that those to whom we declare these suspicions are able to hurt it. Charity would think it an injury to attribute to them a delicateness so unjust as this. Charity knows how to make these explications in a simple and humble manner, that 'tis not possible almost to hurt it. For she is so far from shewing any inclination for those suspicions, that she shews on the contrary, that she desires nothing more than to forsake them in changing her opinion. We scarcely offend against those who desire to be enlightened with this Spirit. But that which makes one troubled at these explications, is, that those who do them, witness oftentimes more eagerness to maintain their opinions, than to instruct themselves whether they be true or not.

13. If we followed these Rules and this Conduct, we should see the greatest part of the differences which weaken Charity amongst persons professing Piety, vanish away. For there are very few of them which are not produced, or which are not maintained by these Impressions, which we do not explain at all. But the worst is, that every one would that others do them this Justice, and yet there are not many that practice it themselves in respect of others. Nevertheless this common Injustice must not withhold and hinder us from doing to others what Charity prescribes us, seeing that this Injustice is evil for them who fall into it, and that Charity is always a Good, and a Spring of Goodness for all those who follow her Motives and Rules.

14. Behold what we owe to our Neighbour when we have conceived these Impressions to his disadvantage. But what ought we to do when others on the contrary are prejudiced against us by injurious and unjust suspicions? Is it sufficient to bear them with patience, and to make no passionate nor angry complaints of them? It would be something to Preserve and keep our
selves;

selves in this moderation towards them. But if we Consult nevertheless the rule of Charity, we shall find that oftentimes we must proceed farther to be satisfied exactly therein. Because sometimes we have reason to think and consider these Impressions as dangerous Diseases for our Neighbour, and to judge at the same time, that there are none but we who can remedy it, or at least that we can do it better then any one. Now in these two Circumstances can we doubt that Charity obliges us not to do all that we can to destroy in them these preventions, be it in clearing them as to the Truth, be it in employing other means proper to give them other thoughts of us, or lastly be it in avoiding all that may furnish their preoccupations.

15. St. Austin teacheth these Maxims, and hath practiced them himself after an admirable manner. He looks upon these suspicions against the Honour of his Neighbour of so great a concern, that he calls them a Poyson able to make Souls to perish. *It is to be wished, saith he, that those who have these thoughts, Wines publicly what they have in the heart, that all sorts*

Aug. Ep.
223,

sorts of Remedies may be employed, rather then suffer them to be lost, without knowing it, by the Poyson of these pernicious doubts and suspicions: *Quam ut taciti pereant perniciosis suspicionibus venenati.* He teacheth that we ought not to be contented with the testimony of our conscience, and that Charity which seeks not after her own interests, obliging to do good, not only before God, but also before men, we ought rather to endeavour to perswade them of the falseness of their suspicions, then to rebuke them, because they make them appear. *Magis satagendum est quomodo persuadeatur hominibus falsum esse quod suspicantur, quam quomodo arguendi sunt qui suspensiones suas vocibus verbisq; declarant.*

The principle of this Doctrine is contain'd in this other Maxim of this holy Doctor, *That, although he who disdains the Practises of men disdains also their rash suspicions, yet if he be truly an honest man, he doth not disdain their Salvation, because he hath so much love for Justice, that he loves even his Enemies, and desires to correct them, to the end he may have them for Companions of his happiness.*

*De Civitate
Dei. l. 14.
c. 19.*

Finally

Finally as it is clear that those we suspect unjustly are not more undeserving our Charity then those that injure us, we might apply to them what St. *Austin* said of the obligation those, who have suffered some Injury, have to cure the Soul of what hath caused it. *This*

man, saith he, hath injured
Aug. Serm. 16. de verb. Dom. in Evan. Mat. you, and in injuring you he
bath hurt himself mightily,
and you slight this hurt of your Brothers.
You see him perish, and you care not if he
perish; your silence in this regard is more
Criminal than the Injury which he hath done
you. Pejor es tacendo quam ille conviciando.
Injuries therefore done you must be forgot-
ten, but forget not your Brothers hurt.

16. These are the Rules established by this holy Doctor; and he hath himself practiced them on an important occasion. For having been suspected by *Albina*, an illustrious Roman Lady, to have contributed through Interest to the Oath *Pinian* made to the People of *Hyppe*, never to go out of their City, and to receive Ordination no where else. Instead of complaining of a suspicion so ill grounded, he thought himself obliged to purge himself thereof by Oath, which he did with an edifying humility, without

out reproaching *Albina*, and without other Prospect then to cure her of the Wounds she had received by this suspicion. *Samenda ista in vobis, non accensenda sunt, et nomine purganda nobis est Fama, si est Dominus purgata Conscientia.*

17. This same Saint having rebuked something too severely, although without naming the person, the error of a Bishop who believed that God was Corporeal, and that he might be seen with human eyes, and this Bishop being so troubled at it that he refused to see him, though he offered to beg his Pardon for the offence, suspecting perchance that it was through Artifice that he shewed so much desire to appease him. Saint *Austin*, instead of being struck with this suspicion, endeavoured only to mollifie this Bishop, and to free him from this Impression, and there's nothing more humble then the manner of his doing it. First he condemned the harshness of his words. *I have been*, said he, *imprudent and harsh in this reproach, and have not considered what I owe to my Brother and Colleague in the Episcopacy; I am so far from vindicating my self in this Point, that I condemn my self: I am so far from excusing it, that I accuse my self* *h*

I may be pardoned, and that this Offence may be concealed by the remembrance of our ancient Friendship. And to destroy the suspicion which this Bishop had of being slighted by him, and that it was by deceit that he sought it, he desired another Bishop whom he took for a Mediator, to free him from these thoughts, *Assure him*, said he, *of my sincerity, and let him know with what sentiments of grief I have spoken to you of his discontent, how far I am from detracting and condemning him, how much I fear God in his Person, and how much I look upon him our Head, in whose Body we are all Brothers. Novit quam eum non contemnam, et quantum in illo Deum timeam, et cogitem Caput nostrum in ejus Corpore Fratres sumus.*

18. Behold what St. *Austin* believed was requisite to be practiced on occasions where there is hopes of Curing other mens suspicions in giving them an account of their Conduct informing them of their true intentions. What if men judge with cause that these kind of explications would be useless, as it happens often enough; Charity should then apply us to seek out other means to destroy these preventions, not because they are hurtful, but because they may

hurt those who have them. Thus instead of complaints and reproaches, which serve only to exasperate mens minds, we should try to shew them who are prejudiced against us, a quite contrary disposition to that they lay to our Charge. If they think we have no esteem nor affection for them, we should endeavour to convince them by effective Proofs, that we love them, and that we esteem them truly. If they imagin that we mistrust them, we ought to seek dilligently some means to give them marks of Trust: If they suspect us for some fault which we are not guilty of, we should labour to take away by little and little this Impression from them, by avoiding what may either entertain and augment it, and by dealing with them in such a manner as is capable to destroy it; and by this means we shall be so far from being hurt by these suspicions, that they give us means to correct our selves of divers faults, and to enrich our selves by the practice of many Vertues.

19. There would be often times likewise no need to dissipate these suspicions by an application so express. It would be sufficient to dissemble them, and

and to continue acting as accustomed with those who are addicted to them, without telling them we perceive them. The uniformity of our Conduct and Behaviour would consume them by little and little; and their minds would find they were changed, even without being aware thereof. But our impatience spoils all; we cannot expect the slow remedies; We would carry the minds away by force, that is to say, we would makethem act against their nature.

20. Although a man have hurt himself by his own fault, though he have by the disorderliness of his living, made himself sick, no man pretends to cure him of his wounds and diseases by reproaching him; we must have recourse to the remedies proper for his distemper; and not wonder that they act only with time. Now we ought not to distinguish in this case the diseases of the Mind from those of the Body. How voluntary soever they may be, they are not for all that, less durable, nor less obstinate. He knows the nature of mans mind but badly, who thinks, that when it is once prepossessed, that Self-love hath an interest in an opinion, that there is formed an inclination in the heart to

judge in a certain manner, we are able to blot out in short time, all these impressions. It is necessary to change this sentiment, that the mind get new Lights, that it be familiar therein, that it loose a certain distrust, which the opinions wherewith it is prepossessed, give it of all that's contrary thereunto; that Self-love accustom it self by little and little, to suffer the reproach of being deceived, and that it forget in some sort, that it had taken another part. All this has need of time, and 'tis ridiculous to pretend, that because some suspicions relate to us, that we ought out of hand to rid our selves of them, and that mens minds ought to act in our consideration in an extraordinary manner.

21. Perhaps there may be more evil in this niceness, which makes us suffer with so much impatience, the unjust suspicions men conceive of us, than there are in these suspicions, whereof we complain. We judge of others, according to our understanding, & those who have but little, judge sometimes ill enough, their hearts for all that, not consenting much thereunto. Oftentimes they have Charity for those they condemn unjustly, and would be very willing to serve them.

Whereas

Whereas this impatience which we experience in the evil judgments men make of us, is a fault which certainly comes from the depravity of the heart, and from the pride whereof it is full.

What do we know but God will permit sometime, that men judge of us little favourably, and that they suspect us wrongfully, to make us more sensible of this wound, and to give us means to heal it? What do we know also, but that he hath annexed our Salvation to the use of this means? Thus in complaining of it, we complain in reality of a favourable remedy God offers us. We oppose the designs of his mercy towards us; we contemn his favours, and we refuse to enter into the way of salvation.



The Seventh Treatise.

That we ought not to be scandalized at good Mens faults.

Textus qui non fuerit scandalizatus me.



When Jesus Christ said, *Blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me*, he gave us to understand by this expression; that 'tis a happiness very rare to be free from this scandal, and by consequence that 'tis a misery very frequent to fall into it. Now if it be true, that the number of these happy men be small, and the number of these miserable Creatures great, we have all a great interest to instruct our selves, what it is to be scandalized in Jesus Christ; and of the extent of this Word, seeing that we would all be of that small number of these blessed, and not of the great number of the miserable.

Jesue

[2.] *Jesus Christ* is properly a subject of scandal to those who know him not, and he is unknown to men only, because he is hidden from them. We stumble not against a stone, but only because we see it not; We hurt not our selves against *Jesus Christ*, but because we know not what he is. Thus to be scandalized at *Jesus Christ*, is not to know him, and to contemn him through blindness and ignorance. That which hides *Jesus Christ* from us is therefore that which makes *Jesus Christ* an occasion of scandal to us. Now there are many things that hid him from men.

His Meanness, his Poverty, his Sufferings, and all the marks of his Infirmitie have hid him from the Jews. They could not believe that this *Messiah*, whom they imagined to themselves, ought to be environed round about with Pomp and Glory, could be that miserable man they saw amongst them, and who was not distinguished from other men by any exterior Luster. They could not imagine that man whom they had crucified, was the Author himself of Life, and therefore *St. Paul* calls the Cross, *The Jews Scandal. Judæis Scandalum.*

[4.] But they are not only the Jews who

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are scandalized at the weakness of Je-
sus Christ. This scandal comprehends
generally all those who love the World.
All those, saith *St. Austin*, who love what
Jesus Christ disdained, and who hate
what he loved, despise Jesus Christ.
For is it not to disdain his Wisdom to
judge of things quite otherwise than he
doth, and to chuse quite contrary to him,
to think that a Good, which he belie-
ved an Evil, and an Evil what he thought
a Good? Now to disdain the wisdom
of Jesus Christ, is to disdain Jesus Christ,
and to be scandalized at him.

5. O how great is this scandal, and
how common! For how few are there
who are exempt? How few who esteem
not men less when clad with the Live-
ries of Jesus Christ, that is to say, with
his poverty, and who inwardly honor
them not more, because they were those
of his enemies, which are the pomps of
the world, which *St. Austin*, with rea-
son, calls the Devils rages, *paucas Dia-
boli*. What are Princes Courts, or ra-
ther what is the World, but a place
where it is a shameful thing to imitate
Jesus Christ?

6. But yet we may not fall into this
scandal, which is only proper to those

who are possessed with worldly Love. We may nevertheless say, that there are few amongst the just themselves, who participate perfectly of this happiness, of not being scandalized at Jesus Christ, not only because they have not always some inclination for things which Jesus Christ hath disdain'd; but also because they are scandalized at him many other ways, which are necessary to be consider'd.

7. Not to be scandalized at Jesus Christ, we ought to know him, and to know him, we ought to understand him entirely. Now Jesus Christ entirely is not only the Head, but also the Members. He lives in them, he is hidden in them. Thus we take another for him when we despise him in his members wherein he is hid.

8. It is much easier to condemn Jesus Christ in his Members then in himself, because there he is more hidden. He was not private in the world, but by meanness of nature; but he is often private in the faithful by many faults, which Jesus hath not had, and also by many faults, which rob us sometimes of the splendor and the odour of their virtue, and make us suspect that they had nothing in them but human. And as this scandal is very dangerous we must embrace all ways imaginable to shun it.

9. One of the principal ways is to comprehend well with what conditions Jesus Christ is hid in the faithful. We must know for that, that this Divine Kingdom, which he came to establish in this world, is an interior Kingdom, *Regnum Dei intra vos est.* He is hid in the bottom of the Soul; where God resides with the Riches of his Grace without shewing often any splendor outwardly. A Soul by the possession of this Kingdom, becomes the object of Gods pleasure; she becomes his Throne and Temple. The Angels who know him, discover therein all these grandeurs. But men discover them only by certain obscure lights, which make them appear in their actions, and in the conduct of their lives, all the rest is darkened by the infirmity of the flesh.

10. This obscurity wherewith God covers in the World the Treasures of Grace, which he puts into Souls, produceth great Good, and great Harm, according to the good or bad use is made thereof. 'Tis one of the great means by which God exercises in the world his Mercy and Justice. It hinders on the one part, that the Just exalt not themselves, nor loose themselves by the sight
and

and knowledge of their proper excellence, and it delivers them on the other part, from the temptation which might be caused in them, by the esteem and admiration of men who should know them. It conserves them in the way of Faith, in depriving them of the sight of onething which would draw them from it by motives too human. For if *St. Austin* say, that God hath not been willing that the renew-
Aug. de Ci-
vit. l. 15.
c. 4.
 ing which Grace produceth in our Souls should extend it self, even to the Body, by conferring immortality to it, lest the hope we ought to have in him, should be too interessed; If this same Saint ascertain, that it is by the same reason that he permits the just to be afflicted in this world, as well as the wicked, for fear we should aim in the services which we render to God, to exempt our selves from temporal evils; We may likewise say, That he permits us not to see the excellence of a just Souls beauty, and the horrible deformity of a Soul in sin, lest it should be through these interessed motives, that we should desire justice, and have an horror for sin.

II. But if this obscurity produce some good in respect of some, it may be said, that

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that it produces very great evils in respect of others, and that 'tis the principal cause of wicked mens blindness. For 'tis that makes worldly people believe that there is nothing in men worthy of esteem, but what flatters their senses, and condemn most part of honest and good men, not seeing in them what they love. What is told them of the good of the soul, they look upon it as a meer imagination, because they neither perceive nor see it. Thus they distinguish men only by the outward qualities, and by the relation they have to their passions, and as virtuous men participate always of the Spirit of the World, they participate also a little of this Illusion. The too great eyes they have of outward qualities, take from them the sentiment of the spiritual misery of many Souls; and often also they have not the esteem they ought to have of the real Goods others possess, because they are covered with outward faults, of which they are too sensible. This is one of the most ordinary means, whereby Jesus Christ is scandalized in his members. For as the Jews would that their *Messias* should be environed with rayes of Glory, we would also that honest men should have no defect, neither inwardly

inwardly nor outwardly, and unless they have this agreeableness which strikes our senses, we have a propensity to condemn them, as seeing their faults and their miseries, but not their Riches and their Goods.

12. This scandal increases infinitely, when these faults which we observe in them, are not simple natural faults, but faults of manners, and true and absolute faults. For if we only need to beg of God to preserve us from the temptation which springs from thence; there is danger that these faults which we see in those, who pass for pious men, do humble and debase them so in our sight, that we deprive our selves of the edification, which we might draw from all the other virtues which we observe in them. Oftentimes these virtues are suspected by us; we begin to apprehend that we have been deceived. We know not what to stick to, and we enter into a certain despair of finding in the world solid virtues.

13. This temptation is at the same time very dangerous, and very ordinary. For it is a hard thing to live long with pious people, but we shall find in them many faults, not only imaginary, but true and real ones. Human Wit never hides

it

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it self absolutely. They suffer themselves to be cheated and beguiled. They are carried away by unjust prejudices: they are sometimes precipitate in their judgments. We see some who are resolved in their thoughts, others who are curious and delicate in what concerns them nearly: Others who are tender and nice in small inconveniences. There are some that their zeal carries to excess. Lastly, There are almost none in whom nature shews not her self by many ways. But if men thereupon are inclined to condemn them, they come to condemn all the world, and to pass from aversion for faults, to aversion for men, according to this saying of an antient person. *Qui vitia edit, homines odit.*

14. 'Tis good therefore to fortify ourselves against this tentation by considerations, which may be found in Faith. Now Faith furnishes us with what may be able to dissipate this tentation, if we apply our selves seriously to it. For Faith shews us that the faults of the just are profitable to them in divers manners, as hath already been said, and likewise, that oftentimes God permits them more for others than for themselves. He darkens their splendor, that those who de-
serve

fewe not to enjoy it, may be deprived of it. He takes from before our eyes, their good examples, to punish us for not having profited by them; he holds back the odor of their Piety, because the world hath not received it as it ought.

15. We are scandalized then often at certain faults in just men, which are not so much for them as for us. They hurt them not, but they hurt us; they are Thorns which are good for them, because they warrant their Piety from the danger it would be in of being withered by mens praises; but these Thorns wounding us, hinder us from approaching, and from perceiving the good smell of them. And thus there are none but we who loose thereby.

16. Just mens faults enter into the order of Providence, and often God makes use of them to execute his greatest designs against the wicked. Possibly *St. Gbrystone* might have dealt better with *Arcadia* and *Eudoxia*; and that if he had done so, they had not abandoned him to the fury of *Theophilus*. But because *Theophilus*, and the wicked Bishops of that time deserved to be abandoned to their passions, and blinded by a success, conform to their designs; God did permit.

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mit this Saint to follow the heat of his
zeal.

17. There are virtuous men, who examining the Life of *S. Thomas of Canterbury*, were perswaded to believe that he might, without violating the Laws of the Church, have yielded to many things, which King *Henry* the Second desired of him; yet the heart of this Holy Bishop being right, and the heart of King *Henry* corrupted, the proceedings of this Saint being Humble and Just, the Kings proceedings violent and unjust, God rather judged of this difference by the purity of the Saints Heart, and the wickedness of his adversary, than by the bottom of the cause, and did not omit to justify him by many miracles, when the whole Church was divided upon his score.

18. The Cardinal of *Arles* was Author of an enterprize which caused great troubles, which was the deposing of *Eugenius IV.* This action was not followed in the Church. It is no where observed that he repented the act; and yet he hath done miracles after his death, God having not laid to his charge what he did through zeal of Justice, though in some circumstances which rendred his
action

at *Good Monks Faults*. 329
 action imprudent; *Sa. Peter of Laure-
 burg, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Catherine of
 Siena*, were in divers and different times
 of Schisme, and by consequence some
 of them for the Anti-Pope; yet never-
 theless this blemish hath not hindered
 their Sanctity.

19. They who write the Lives of Saints
 think that 'tis their Duty to set forth all
 their virtues, and to hide all their faults.
 But I do not know if they should not do
 as well to take notice of all their faults,
 as of their virtues, to hinder thereby,
 that men be not scandalized at such as
 appear in some pious men which we
 know. Whosoever for example, shall
 make reflections on the manner how
 Three Saints, to wit, *Sa. Epiphanius,
 St. Jerome, and St. Cyril of Alexandria,*
 acted upon account of *St. John Grys-
 tome*, will wonder no more that virtu-
 ous men be sometimes prevented, and
 fall sometimes into excess, and they
 will conceive, that there is very great
 limitation in this passage. *Charitas operis
 multitudinem peccatorum.*

20. We see often in Saints some faults
 which God sees no more there; where-
 as we see not in our selves, those which
 are truly there. If they commit faults
 through

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through Ignorance, the heat of their
charity purifies them, even without their
acknowledging them, and thus they sub-
sist no more. If they commit some thro
weakness, or thro some passion, they
humble themselves, and they rise again
more strong than they were before they
fall, and by this means again they sub-
sist no more. But the faults of Souls
grown cold, altho more inconsider-
able in appearance, subsist always in
the eyes of God, because they want this
fire of Charity to consume them, and
because they are not restor'd again ab-
solutely.

27. We must distinguish faults of passion
from faults of darkness, and faults of
light; the faults of understanding, from
faults of the heart: Nor is there pro-
perly any but God who can judge of
faults which spring from ignorance,
wherein Cupidity appears not to have
any share at all: Nor is it permitted for
men to determine of the degree.

22. All Saints have in their hearts a
sincere disposition to love, and follow
every known Truth. But they know
not equally all Truths, nether are they
equally appropriated to all those they
know. God enlightens and touches them
differently

differently, according to the several designs he hath upon them, and by giving them an ardent Love for certain Truths, by which he will sanctify them; he suffers sometimes that in respect of others they remain in some kind of obscurity, or in a want of judgment; which comes not from the corruption of their hearts, but from this, that God applys them to other things. 'Tis this that makes these who love these Truths, to be oftentimes troubled to see them so little concerned for them, because they consider not that they themselves are in this deprivation of Light and Judgment, in regard of many others, and that the heart of man being limited, and narrow in the condition it is in, as to this life, God doth not exact, that it should love Truth, Truth in all its extent, but only that it be the love of Truth, and not Cupidity, which should be the principal of its actions.

23. When God leaves the Saints thus in Ignorance, as to many Truths, or diverts and stops the occasions, which might engage them to commit some faults thro ignorance, or hides by the purity of their hearts, and by the ardency of their Charity, those which they commit, it happens nevertheless from

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from hence, that we may easily make ill
use of their examples, whether it be in
imagining that we ought to follow blind-
ly all they have done, or in behaving
our selves, so as to condemn these Saints,
because of these wants of Light. But
both the one and the other of these scan-
dals must be remedied by the conside-
ration of this various dispensation which
God makes of the knowledge of this
Truth. For we see by this on the one
side, that there may remain darkness in
the Saints, in respect of certain points,
in which by consequence they ought not
to be taken for guides, and we have
reason to conclude on the other, that
it follows not, that those in whom we
perceive the wants of Light, in respect
of certain Truths, cannot be Saints by
the application they have to others.

24. We may add to this, that per-
chance those who hurt in appearance
certain Truths thro ignorance, and
lack of Light, have before God, more
love and zeal for them, than these who
shew a great heat for those same Truths.
For God hath particularly regard to the
bottom of the heart, and when he sees
there a sincere love for Truth and Ju-
stice,

stice, a disposition to follow them at the cost of all things, he hath less regard to the darkness, which hinders this Love to spread it over certain particular points. Whereas it happens sometimes, that this Zeal, so apparent for certain Truths, is nothing but the effect of Self-love, and a tye to its proper sense. We maintain Truth, as we should maintain what is false, if we had the same engagements to do it; and oftentimes God sees nothing that's sincere at the bottom of the heart, which leads directly to Truth.

25. Those who by a more exact study of antiquity, should have acquired knowledge and some light, which very Holy persons should not have had, should yet have occasion to humble themselves by this thought; that those Truths, the great and important, are not ordinarily those, the practice whereof is most frequent, and which are the principal of the common actions which compose our lives. Thus as the occasion of practising them are not very ordinary, they become often barren in these who know them, and we may easily believe, that men love them without

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out any real or effective love for them.
It is altogether contrary with common
Truths, as with those which teach to con-
verse with our neighbour, in an edify-
ing manner, to have God present in all
our actions, and to do nothing but by
his Motive, and his Spirit, to mortify
all the inordinate excesses of Self-love,
to lop off all things useless to this life,
to correct the senses in all that we can,
to moderate our passions, to govern all
the motions of Mind and Body, not to
complain of little evils, to receive fa-
vourably those who mind us of some
defect, not to be tyed to our own Sense
and Light; to be reserved in our judg-
ments. Those Truths which prescribe
these actions, are not less Truths than
the others, whereof we have spoken, but
they have this advantage, that the pra-
ctice is ordinary, and that we scarcely
flatter our selves with loving them, with-
out we love them truly. These are
those which all the Saints have known,
and 'tis in practising them, and loving
them, that they are become Saints.
Whereas it happens, that those who
are more knowing in these Truths less
frequent, and which serve only as Rules
11.0 to

to great Actions, apply themselves much less to these common Truths, whose continual practice is the true source of the sanctification of Souls, and of the edification we give to those who are witnesses of our actions.

26. Nevertheless, it happens some times that persons who appear very exact, and very edifying in their common actions, are sunk down in great businesses, for having neglected to search the Lights which were necessary for them to march therein, or through other secret reasons, which God knows, and that others on the contrary, whose Lives indeed were less exact, and stufte more with small faults, shew great courage and force in those occasions of importance, and shew also, that they had at the bottom of the heart, a solid and true love for God. And that's it which ought to humble in their turn, those who are more outwardly and orderly and more composed, because they know not for all, that what their force is, and that perchance they are with all this outward regularity, weaker and more imperfect before God, than those whose imperfections strike more upon the
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336. *That we ought not to be scandalized*
the eyes of the world. So great a care
hath God to keep in this life, all things
in obscurity, and uncertainty, to take
from us all right of magnifying our selves
in our selves, and condemning others.

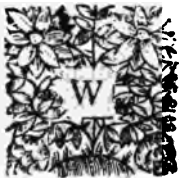
1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are
 well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but
 I have managed to find some time to write to you.
 I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are
 well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but
 I have managed to find some time to write to you.
 I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
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 well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but
 I have managed to find some time to write to you.



The Eighth Treatise.

The means of profiting by bad Sermons.

1.  E cannot avoid sometimes hearing bad Sermons. For besides that, we know not all the bad Preachers, and that 'tis not just to avoid them until we know them. The Preachers themselves are not alike in Preaching, either always good, or always bad; and that thus in seeking out a good Sermon, we oftentimes find a very bad one. Methinks a pious person cannot dispense with himself, from hearing Preachers, what ever they be. Because Sermons in general being necessary for the Church, and God having chosen this way for the instruction of his people, it is requisite, that they whose Piety serves
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for a Rule to others, contribute to cause this ministry to subsist, in giving the example to render themselves assiduous in publick instructions. Otherwise if thro a judgment which they might make of the Preachers; they did perswade the people to dispense with the hearing them, this Ministry would by little and little be laid aside, and the simple poor people would find themselves thereby deprived of the principal means which God hath given them to be instructed with the necessary Truths for their Salvation.

2. But that they may not ordain only this action to the edification of others, and that they may profit also thereby themselves, their Piety ought to apply them to find some means whereby they may profit by all sorts of Sermons: and seeing that 'tis not in their power to cause, that all those who engage themselves to preach, acquit themselves of this ministry as they ought, they ought to labour to acquit themselves as they should of that duty of hearing Sermons, which is another function, having likewise its obligations, and by consequence its rules.

3. We see at first, that the seeking out of these means, and of these rules, ought to consist in finding out Holy inventions, whereby to edify our selves by bad Sermons. For there needs no method to gain by good ones. Every one knows, that he ought to open his heart to solid Truths, which are declared to him therein; that he ought to beg Grace of God, that they increase as Divine Seed; that he ought to conserve them in his memory as a precious Treasure; that he must act in such sort, that weighing them often in his mind, they may take root, and spread themselves there, and that lastly he must seek occasions to reduce them into practice;

4. We know yet, that we ought not to place in the number of bad Sermons, those, wherein Truths, otherwise solid and edifying, should be proposed after a gross and unpleasing manner; wherein the Preacher should have but a little Talent, little of outward address, little facility to express himself. For provided, that the Subject be good, it is requisite that a judicious Auditor fix himself thereto, and that he make use of it to cover the outward defects.

5. It ought to be the same, when that which stumbles us in a Preacher, is nothing but the little relation of his thoughts to the matter. For provided, that the Truths be good and profitable in themselves, what imports it, that the relation of it be so just? But I would gladly, says one, that they had been proposed to us in another application. Well, separate them from this application which stumbles you, and consider them in themselves, or make you another application of them. 'Tis always to oblige you, to have given you means to be attentive to these Truths. They deserve very well to be attentively considered for themselves.

6. But there are Sermons which are defective, even at the bottom, and which are only made up of words, which have more of sound than of sense in them. There are some wherein are distributed only shallow speculations, and unsolid thoughts: which leave the Soul in want and hunger, whereto we can add nothing for the correction of her manners, and wherein the people comprehend as little, as if they were made or preached in an unknown language. There are some likewise, wherein the Preachers

ers dissemble or weaken the Truth by a criminal cowardise or baseness, or alter it through Ignorance or Interest.

As tis impossible that those who have a little light, should not acknowledge these faults, we ought not to force them that they should dissemble them to themselves, but only that they extol not and magnify them. On the contrary, it is good that they endeavour to comprize the greatness of the excesses which are committed in this point, and that they lament before God for so unworthy a manner, wherein Truth is handled by men. For this Holy lamentation conducing to Piety, all that excites it is profitable to them, and contributes to their edification.

7. In considering with this Spirit, the outrages done to Jesus Christ, in the dispensation of his word, they will find that they are not less, than those he received in the distributing of his Body; and that it may be said likewise, that they are greater, and that thus they ought to be to us a greater cause of grief, humiliation, and terror. For altho there may be many criminal and vicious Priests, who insinuate themselves to the administration of the Sacraments and

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and the distribution of the Body of Jesus Christ; there is nothing more rare then to find of them impious enough to give to the faithful unconsecrated Hosts instead of the Body it self of *Jesus Christ*, or to mingle Poyson with Consecrated Hosts, that thereby they may kill the Bodies of those who receive them.

Thus altho the wicked Priests commit a Sacrilege through the boldness they have of insinuating themselves into the Divine Functions, those nevertheless who participate of the Body of *Jesus Christ* by their Ministry, receive no prejudice thereby. 'Tis not the same with the Word of God. For there are not only some Priests who dishonour it by presuming to Preach it, when they ought to think of nothing more then doing Penance for their Crimes, and who draw upon themselves thereby the Reproach which God makes them in these words of the Kingly Prophet. *Peccatori autem dixit Deus, quare tu enarras Justitias meas, & assumis Testamentum meum per Os tuum?* But there are those who poyson it by their bad Maxims, or by their Passions, and they who do this, instead of giving life to Souls, bring often death. And lastly there are some, who, instead
of

of the true word of God, distribute only their imaginations, which is not hurtful only to the ignorant in depriving them of the nourishment they have need of, but deceives them wickedly by suffering them to receive, as the Word of God, thoughts altogether human and profane.

8. We need not only apply these considerations to the present State of the Church to acknowledge that there are a great number of Christians that suffer what the Scripture calls *Famam Verbi*, The desire of God's Word, because those who are charged with this instruction, instead of solid Truths drawn from this word, wherewith they ought to nourish them, feed them only with their own proper thoughts and vain speculations; and that thence it is that the Church experiences in many places this terrible Wound wherewith God has at other times threatned to strike the *Jews*, which the same Scripture calls *Ubera Arentia*, The Breasts giving no Milk, that is to say; Pastors without light, and incapapable of nourishing their people with the Doctrine of Truth; which at the same time ought to stir up in us sentiments of Compassion for the spiri-

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tual misery of so many Souls, motives of acknowledgment, that God hath treated us more favourably than them, in giving us the knowledge of his Truth, which he suffers them to be deprived of, and a wholesome fright through the consideration of the little use we have made of all these helps.

9. If these Sermons which please us so little of themselves, did make just enter into these Sentiments, they would also become as profitable to us as those which fill our memories the most with edifying Truths. There are hardly any of more importance than those which may be learnt by the chastisement which God exercises upon the Church. For he shews that the knowledge of Truth is not due to us, that we deserve to be deprived of it; that this deprivation is the just punishment of our disorders; that we ought to impute to our selves this want of Evangelical Preachers; that thus the faults they commit in the exercise of their ministry, are in some sort ours, seeing that 'tis to punish us, that God permits them.

10. We must not imagine that we have no reason to fear, as to our selves, the effects of Gods wrath, under presence

tence that we are better instructed, and that we have divers ways to supply the defects of Preachers. For God hath also other sorts of blindnesses to spread over us, which we ought not to apprehend less. If he punish us not by depriving us of the knowledge of some particular Duty in some important occasions, and this deprivation is enough to make us enter into some unlucky engagements, and to render all our other knowledges useless. We have not therefore less need of his light, nor less obligation to seek it. And as this Light is communicated in the ordinary way by the Ministry of men; no man can say, he hath not need of a Preacher, that is, of a man who makes him understand what God requires from him.

11. But there is no need that this consideration of the disorders, which are committed in the dispensation of Gods word, as well as in the distributing the Body of Jesus Christ, apply us only to the consideration of his Justice towards the wicked; it ought to fill us yet more with the admiration of his bounty towards the Elect. For 'tis for them that he suffers all those prophanations, with an incomprehensible patience. 'Tis for them

them he commands, that his Body reside even to the end of the world upon our Altars, and that it enter into the mouths of all those who would receive him without having regard to the Sacriledges that so many impious people commit in receiving it, to the end, that his chosen may not be deprived of this Divine nourishment, which is the ordinary means of their Salvation. Hence it happens sometimes, that the Body of Jesus Christ remains whole years in the Churches, in the hands of wicked Priests, who dishonour it every day by new Impieties, and receives thereby abundance of outrages on the score of disorderly Christians, to the end, that some poor Woman may have the means to partake thereof, or to come and adore it. 'Tis also sometimes not there for those who compass this particular Church, because they may be all impious and wicked. It is there for those who shall spring from them long after. It is also in consideration of his Elect, that he suffers that some wicked men corrupt and prophane his word in declaring it, and that he permits that men preach it to people who draw no profit from it, and who become only more criminal thereby, to the end, that some simple Souls, who shall be there present

present, may be instructed, and edified with it; or at least, that the Ministry being conserved, some of the chosen; who perhaps shall be many years after, may find in these places, instructions they may have need of.

As Piety then ought to make us adore the infinite Charity of Jesus Christ, residing upon our Altars, and suffering for the good of his Elect, all the outrages which he received there, it ought not to incline us less to adore this same Charity, which makes him endure the most scornful manner, wherewith his Truth is Treated, whether in pronouncing or in hearing it. And it is very just to conclude, that it would be the height of ingratitude, not to expose our selves for the interest of Truth to receive some evil usage on the score of men, seeing that God suffers every day, that this Truth be exposed to so many disdain, and to so many irreverences for our good.

12. Nevertheless, great care must be taken to keep this consideration of faults committed by those who pronounce the word of God within its just limits, lest it should carry us too far; and that as there appears little Light, little Unction, and often little Judgment in certain

Sermons, it make us not conclude that the Preacher is absolutely unprovided of all those qualities. For this Judgment may be ill-grounded. There are some persons who preach very ill, and who nevertheless have Piety, and also Light and Judgment in other things; and the reason thereof is, that they preach ill, because they have a false Idea, and that they have at first proposed evil models. They apprehend, I know not how, that Sermons ought to have something that's excellent, sublime, and extraordinary; and that common and popular thoughts are to be avoided therein. Thus when they are to preach, they neither consult the Heart, nor the disposition of their Auditors; they skip into a certain region of their mind, where most commonly they inhabit not, and where they have a magazine of false thoughts, and shallow speculations, which this false Idea wherewith they are pre-occupied makes them approve. But as their Judgment is only spoiled in this place, they forbear not to be judicious in other things, when they leave the Pulpit, where they are in some sort in a violent state and condition, and are returned to their ordinary manner of speaking and thinking.

13. After we shall have practised this equity towards the Preacher, and resolved to manage him as well as we shall be able in what shall be said before others, for fear of hindring the fruit he might make upon those who should have other Considerations, than we. We shall be forced to consider all that he says, and endeavour to find therein something, which may be able to edify us, and whereunto we may fix our minds; and it is very hard if we prosper not therein, if we do it faithfully; or that we have not at least reason to be convinced, that 'tis our lack of Light and Virtue, which hinders us from profiting thereby.

14. We desire always that all Sermons should contain some brave principle of Morality well expressed, and well explicated, that they may make us observe some considerable defect in the lives of Christians, that they may make us prone to practice some important obligation, And indeed it were to be wished that they were such; and 'tis a defect when that is not; because Preachers ought to imagine that the vulgar people are scarcely edified without these kind of Sermons, which made *St. Francis of Sales* say, *That he did not find that a Sermon was*
good,

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good, if the Preacher had not for his Mark the Building some Corner of the Walls of Jerusalem. Nevertheless we ought to acknowledge that 'tis also a fault to have so strict a Piety. Christian Virtue has a larger extent. It is not always busied with the correction of our manners, nor with the care of instructing or teaching Christian Principles. It is forgetful sometimes of it self, that it may be raised absolutely to God, to admire him, to Praise him, to consider his Mysteries in themselves without any reflection upon it self, to Contemplate the works of his Mercy and Justice, to rejoyce at the Graces he hath bestowed on the Saints. Now there are no Sermons which are not able to stir up in us some of these Motives, if we were disposed thereto, and if our minds were not so limited as not to search occasions of edification but of a certain kind, which makes that oftentimes we find as few to edifie themselves by certain Sermons of the Fathers, as by those we hear now a days.

15. We flatter our selves ordinarily with being of the number of those, whom St. *Austin* calls *non Verborum sed Rerum avidos*, greedy of Things, but not of Words,

Words; and we imagin that 'tis this which displeases us in Sermons where there are more words then things. Nevertheless we may say that this disgust comes rather from a contrary defect, that is to say, for that we are more fixed to the manners and ways then to the things themselves, and that we love the rarity, the excellency, and the aptness of thoughts, better then their Solidity and Truth. For lastly there are no Sermons so bad where there is not something of Truth; but they touch us not at all, because they are either common or out of their place, or ill expressed, or that they are mingled with false thoughts, or they miss the Subject. So seeing all these faults joyned to Truth take the relish of it absolutely away, we must needs have but little love for it. A Diamond cast into the dirt, looses not its luster nor its price in regard of us; we take great care to dig it out when we discover it, and often apply our selves thereto so much the more as we find it in a place that seems to dishonour it. We should make as much of this Pittance of Christian Truths, which is found in certain Sermons, it would be just that we apply our selves thereunto

thereunto with so much more attention that our Spirits might not be distracted by a great number of things which might deserve application. Now there is no Christian Truth considered as it ought, that is not capable to comfort us, and likewise there is not any which will not appear to have a very large extent if we have light enough to penetrate what it includes.

v. 16. We ought to consider well that these common truths which we hear with disgust are infinitely above all that can be found in the Books of Paganism; which men read with so much esteem; and so much pleasure; That 'Tis a particular Grace that God has done us to have been pleased to discover them to us, having kept them hid four thousand years from all men; that the Prophets themselves and the Saints of the Old Testament have sighed to know them in this excellency with which they are revealed to us; that they make up part of those Judgments which *David* spoke of with so much sense of acknowledgment. *Non fecit taliter omni Nationi, & Jadicia sua non manifestavit eis.* And this may suffice to give us Confusion that some human defects with which they

they are envenomed, may make us loose entirely the gust and love for them.

17. As St. *Augustin* says, That men discern Beauty and Justice better when they observe them in objects, which have nothing but what gives horroar to the Senses, such as the members of Martyrs were, when covered over with Wounds; may we not say also that they cannot acknowledge better that they love Truth for it self, then when presented to us in discourses wherein we can love nothing but it, and where we find also an infinite of displeasing things. Thus these sorts of Sermons may be made good use of to honour Truth for it self, without dividing the homage which we give to it. And the least Truth honoured in this sort would be able to edifie us more then the most touching instructions which please the mind better.

18. There are almost no Sermons so bad, whereby a man may not be edified, if what he said therein be new, and that we know nothing what it contains by means of any other way. There is not, for Example, any Discourse so cold either of Paradiſe or Hell, but makes great Impressions upon us, if we have never heard speak thereof elsewhere. That.

That which takes away the thought of these things is then that they are already known to us, and that we are accustomed thereunto. But if we cannot avoid this cause of human Infirmary, we may very well at least humble our selves thereby, and make use of it to acknowledge that human Wit is of so little or no account, seeing that the same objects which have justly touched it at one time, doe not at another, through this vain circumstance, that it is accustomed therunto; as though this custome did change the nature of those objects, and took any thing from them of what they have either of terrible or great.

19. 'Tis one of the reflections which the Sermons called bad gives leave to make, and many more may be added to it of this nature, in making use of what shocks us therein to know our proper faults. And in considering them in this prospect, The more a Sermon is filled with human defects, the more it would be proper for us to serve as a draught of what we are, and the manner how we act. For the lives of Christians ought to be a continual Preaching, which should carry into the mind of others a lively Image of all Vertues. St. Peter
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the Apostle recommends to us the insinuating of Humility in all things. *Humilitatem in omnibus insinuanter*, that is to say, that he wills Christians to preach Humility in all their actions. The same may be said of all other Vertues, and we ought to do nothing which may not help to engrave them in the heart of others; as a Preacher ought to say nothing which is not edifying to his Auditors. . Nevertheless how far are our actions from making this Impression upon the minds of those that see them? On the contrary what do we most commonly bring thither, but the Image of our Passions, of our disorderly Motions, of our secret Interests? We preach almost by our actions as they preach by their words, and we acquit our selves of the general Ministry of Christians, as they acquit themselves of the particular Ministry of Preachers: Let us not look upon their faults alone, but upon our own in theirs, and let us turn one part of that disgust we have for them against our selves.

20. If we look narrowly thereunto, we shall find that the particular faults into which they fall, do much resemble ours, and have almost the same causes.

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These people follow generally. their thoughts and phancies without reflecting whether they will be proportioned to the mind of those who hearken to them. We follow also our Humours and Passions without any regard to proportion our Actions and Words to the minds of those with whom we live, which is the reason that we startle them a thousand ways, and that we do nothing that edifies them.

21. There are some Preachers who startle understanding and judicious Hearers in crying out without reason upon small things, in chaffing themselves about things which deserve it not, and by making appear I know not how many false Motives, which incommode strangely those who have the *Idea* of Justice as well for the Motives as the things.

But this defect, is it not infinitely, greater, and more frequent in our Lives than in Sermons? For how many motives slide into our actions and words, which are false, not according to Rhetorick, but according to Faith? Do we not often shew the inclination and esteeme we have for some actions, which ought to cause nothing but sentiments of horror? Do we not receive often-times

times with scorn, and disdain things which ought to excite only Piety? How much do we extoll things which ought to appear mean, and disdainful to us? How much do we cry down some things, which indeed are noble and worthy to be admitted? How cold do we speak of those we ought to have the greatest concern for? They are so many false motives by so much more dangerous; as they spring from the bad disposition of the heart; whereas those of Preachers denote often only in them a simple, and meer want of wit.

22. The more one hath the Idea of justness, be it for things or for motives, the more one deserves defects in Preachers. And hence one may say, that the reputation of many of them who make a great shew in this employment, is only grounded upon the little light of their Auditors. If we had also understanding spectators, and who had the Idea of the true motives that the objects ought to excite in us, the manner whereby we act and speak, would become almost insupportable to them. They would only see in us depraved Inclinations, unjust Impressions, lack of sense and love for things

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things which deserve most, and they would find in respect of us, something of that Holy Commotion, which Jesus Christ shewed in regard of the Jews by these words. *O generatio incredula quousque vos patiar!* the meekness with which men bear with us, is not then any thing but the effect of blindness of men. We only surpass by the favour of their want of light; and it is very just that we should suffer patiently in others, what they suffer continually from us.

23. What diverts Preachers from the right way, and casts them upon false eloquence, upon vain thoughts, and of no edification, is often because they have other prospects, than they ought to have in acquitting themselves of their ministry. They would appear Wise, Eloquent, and Able, they would appear wits; in a word they speak for themselves, and not for their Auditors; and in speaking in this manner, they speak often neither for their Auditors nor themselves. These are likewise those false Prospects, which are mingled with our actions, which destroy the edification of them; if we had no other than to satisfy our obligation, and to serve our neighbor, they

they would spread an odour of Piety, which would gain hearts insensibly, but the passions and secret desires which are intermingled, hinder this effect, and produce ordinarily quite different impressions from those we pretend. The desire we make appear of exalting our selves, makes us dis-esteemed in the eyes of other men. We please so much less, by how much it appears that we have had a design to please: and by a natural contradiction in men, they conceive justly passions, quite opposite to those which they observe in us.

24. These Preachers whereof we speak are particularly proper to make known the wretchedness and the blindness of mens vanity. They tire themselves in their Closets to bring forth brave thoughts; they overcharge their memory with labour, they distribute them with boldness, and afterwards they rise from their Chair well satisfied with themselves, imaging to have left a great Idea of themselves in their Auditors. For men do not seek these pretended high thoughts for any thing else but to please, and it is difficult that in thinking to please others, men please not themselves. Nevertheless

vertheless there is very often nothing at all that persons of Piety have a commiseration for these sorts of Sermons. Those who are not very charitable laugh at them, and almost all never think a quarter of an hour after them. 'Tis almost as men deal with us, when instead of searching the true good, they aim only at obtaining the good repute of men. We thereby become the object of their disdain and malignity, and those who are the most favourable to us, scarce trouble themselves with us, the space of one quarter of an hour.

25. The subtilty of these Preachers may yet serve to make us observe how little help we get from others to correct our selves of our faults. For altho there be none more exposed than those of Preachers, nevertheless, there is nothing more ordinary than to see some who remain all their life, without finding one single person, who advertises them of it. Men think that tis a civility due to testify to them, that they are satisfied with their Sermons; and those Civilities being received through Self-Love, pass for sincere testimonies and authentick approbations. Thus a Preacher deceived
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ceived by others, and by himself, continues oftentimes to abuse his Ministry all his life; he destroys instead of building, and he drains unprofitably, not only the Forces of his Body, but also those of his Soul, which yet is impaired more than the Body by this employ, when he acquits himself not as he ought.

26. It is less strange, that the Preachers, who are subject to none, correct themselves in their faults but very little. They are generally called to this Ministry, they preach when they will, and as they will, and no man is particularly concerned how they do it. But who will not be astonish'd, that Preachers chosen by regular Societies, where men admit them not to this Ministry, but with Discretion, Caution, and mature Deliberation, should oftentimes make shew of so little Spirituality and Light, in their Sermons, and that they should not stuff them less than others, with mean and unprofitable Scholastic terms.

That which ought to increase our admiration upon this point, is that in the same Orders wherein men suffer;

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Thus

Thus persons to preach as they please, and with faults visibly contrary to the intent of their Ministry; they should not suffer them to make a false step in their Cereemonies, a mistake in bowing, or that they should want the least of their regular Practices. There are in these sorts of Societies, punishments ordained for all faults, against regularity; but there are none at all for those who abuse the word of God, whether in distributing it to the people in vain, and abstract thoughts, instead of giving them a solid nourishment, and proportion'd to their occasions; or in destroying the fruit of the Truths they declared by an ostentation of Knowledge and Eloquence. They leave absolutely to the Preachers, the manner whereby they acquit themselves of their Ministry. They let them follow their Ideas, and if they give them some Rules to govern themselves by, they are so extravagant, and so little exact, that they think to follow them, by doing quite the contrary to what they ought.

27. We cannot doubtless, alleadge any other reason for this Conduct, unless that they know very well in these Societies, in what consists the manner of practising the Ceremonies; but have a very small Idea, what 'tis to pronounce Gods Word in a way worthy of him, and know scarcely the importance of some faults which are committed in abusing of this Ministry, and in relating it to our Selves, and not to the benefit of our Auditors.

This is the conclusion which methinks should be drawn from thence, but it extends it self much further than this example; and if we will do our selves justice, we shall find that it Concerns us divers and sundry ways. Because we are exact in the practice of certain exterior Duties, even to the being fixed thereunto, in a superstitious and judicial manner; but we have only very confus'd Ideas of the greatest part of Spiritual Duties, and Interior Virtues; which is the reason that we scarcely know the faults we commit against these Duties and Virtues. We know not what true Humility, inward mortification, the love of justice, the dependance
upon

upon God, and the desire of suffering is: And as they are these inward Virtues, which are the source of the Unction, and Edification, which spread themselves into our Actions and Words; it is not strange, that not knowing them, and likewise not having a true Idea of them, there is nothing that's edifying either in our Conversation, or in our Lives.

FINIS.

M O R A L
E S S A Y S.

The Fourth Volumn.

Contained in Two

T R E A T I S E S.

The First concerning

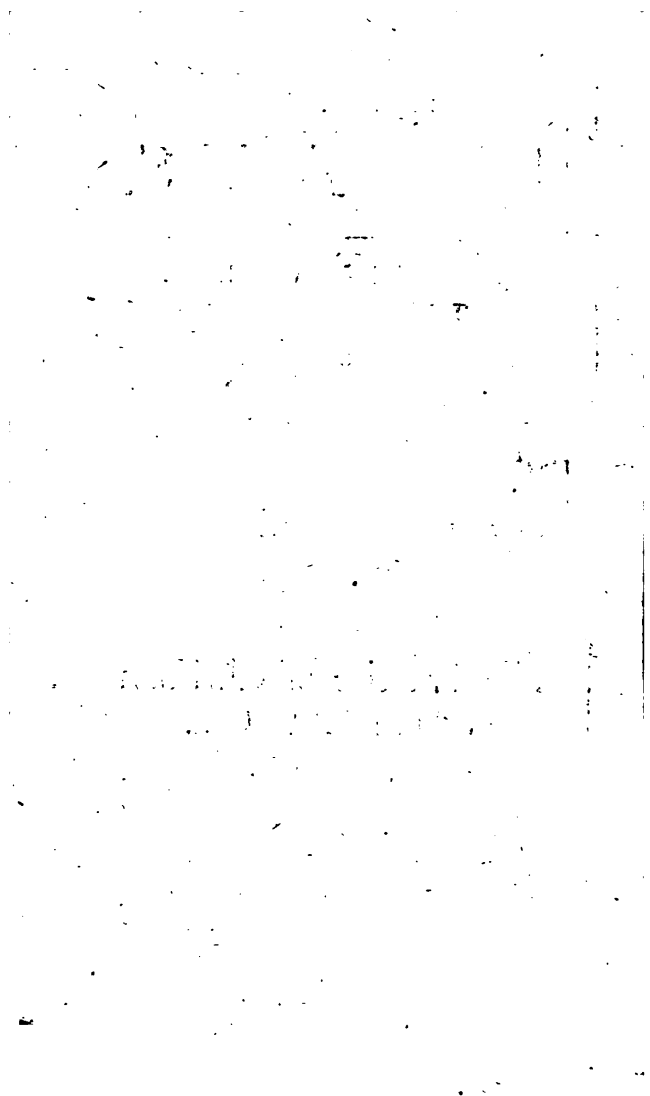
The Four Last ENDS of
M A N.

The Second concerning

The Practice of Christian
VIGILANCE.

*Written Originally in French, and now
Translated into English.*

L O N D O N, Printed for R. Bentley
and M. Magnes, in Russel-street, Covent-
garden. 1682.



THE PREFACE.

WHETHER we desire to consider seriously upon our proper Salvation, or that we will labour to inspire this desire into those who think not thereof; it is equally necessary to know the beginning of the way which leads threunto; either to be able to enter into it our selves, or to show it to others.

What is advantage to be Enquiry, is, That those we ought to consult upon this point are no way divided in opinions. For Scripture declaring, That the beginning of Wisdom is the fear of our Lord. *Initium Sapientiæ timor Domini:* And the Fathers, to whom we ought to address our selves to understand the sense, have all concluded, that to return to God, it is necessary that the Mind

The Preface.

be shaken with motives of fear, and that 'tis that which gives the love of God entrance into the Soul, which is only able to operate a Solid conversion therein. If Man, saith St. Augustin, in Ps. 149. do not begin to serve God through fear, he shall not arrive at love, because the fear of our Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.

We must necessarily, saith St. Basil, in Ps. 32. have recourse to Fear to introduce us to Piety, and after that Love succeeds, and gives perfection. ~~more~~ who have ~~instructed~~ by Fear.

It is impossible, saith St. Gregory, the Great, in Homil. 4. in Evang. to cure the Soul of the disorders whereunto she hath been accustomed, but by overwhelming her first by Fear.

It is very true that the sole Fear of pain is not able to take away the affection we have for sin, because it
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The Preface.

is uncapable of changing by it self the inclination of the heart. And thus, as St. Austin saith, in Epist. 144. In vain do we think to overcome sin, when there is nothing but the Fear of pain which hinders us from committing it.

Nevertheless Fear is always very useful, even then when it is not joyned to Love. For by bindring the exterior Actions of sin, it hinders the habitude from being contracted; it weakens even that which may have been contracted, and prepares the way to Charity. Pellit, saith St. Austin, consuetudinem, malorum operum & servat charitati locum. We begin, saith he in another place, to acknowledge, that what we thought insupportable is easie; we come from tasting the sweetness of Piety, and to be touched with the beauty of Virtue, which causes the Soul to pass from the bondage of Fear to the liberty of Love.

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'Tis not only to those who begin to enter into the way of God, it is likewise for those who march therein, and advance themselves thereby, that Fear is necessary, because it helps us to bear Temptations, it brings down Pride, and keeps the Soul in Humility. And therefore St. Austin permits only those in whom Charity is perfect, to pass without Fear. Let a Christian, saith he, De Temp. Serm. 214. uphold himself by Fear, until it be banisht by the perfection of Charity. Timeat Christianus, antequam perfecta Charitas foras mittat Timorem. And the opinion of this Father, which is the same with all the rest, is confirmed in such a manner by experience, that one may say, that what renders so many devotions, light, inconstant, rash, presumptuous, phantastick, evaporated, is, that they are not built upon the foundation of a wholesome Fear. Mans Mind hath such a propensity to Pride, that

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that it ought always to have some counterpoise to humble it. It is a vessel which must be filled with Sand to ballance it, otherwise it will overturn, and become the shuttle-cock of all sort of Winds. And 'tis that which made St. Bernard say, Happy is the Conscience in which there is continually a combate between Fear and Love, even until what is mortal therein may be swallowed up by Death; even until that Fear which is imperfect be banisht away, to give place for Joy which is perfect.

It is therefore contributing something to the profit of most Christians, to present them with some Objects capable to produce in them some sentiments of Fear. And as there are none more proper thereunto than Death, Judgment, and Hell, therefore I have chosen those, not by endeavouring to exalt and to aggrandise the Idea of them, by thoughts

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more splendid than solid, but only by labouring to shew them more distinctly, and to take away from before Mens eyes the Vail which hinders them from seeing these Objects.

Thus the substance of the first Treatise of this Volumn, shall be what is called, The Four last Ends of Man. For to the end there may be none wanting, I have thought I ought to add thereunto what relates to Heaven, without missing the design I had of proposing some Objects of Fear. Heaven being not only an Object of desire, but also of terrour, seeing that there is nothing more to be feared than the being absolutely excluded.

This Fear may be very chaste and very pure in persons advanced in virtue, who only consider in felicity the possession of God. It may be also impure and interressed in those who should consider therein principally

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principally the exemption from miseries in this present life. But although interessed, it does not cease to have the same usefulness as the Fear of punishment hath; and thus 'tis good to excite it in those who enter, or who walk in the way of Salvation.

I know very well there is nothing more common, and if I may say so, more popular than this Subject, and that there needs no more for many people to be discouraged at it. But I have not thought I ought to stop at this wicked delicateness, which is perchance one of the greatest Evils of Mankind, seeing that it renders unprofitable to them what is most capable of imprinting something in their Minds.

*Doubtless it is better to represent to them, that these Objects are no commoner than others, but as they are greater, more important, and more terrible; and that they could
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have no worse reason not to think at all, but because it is Evident to all the World that there is nothing which does deserve more that we think thereof, which is that which renders them so common, so popular.

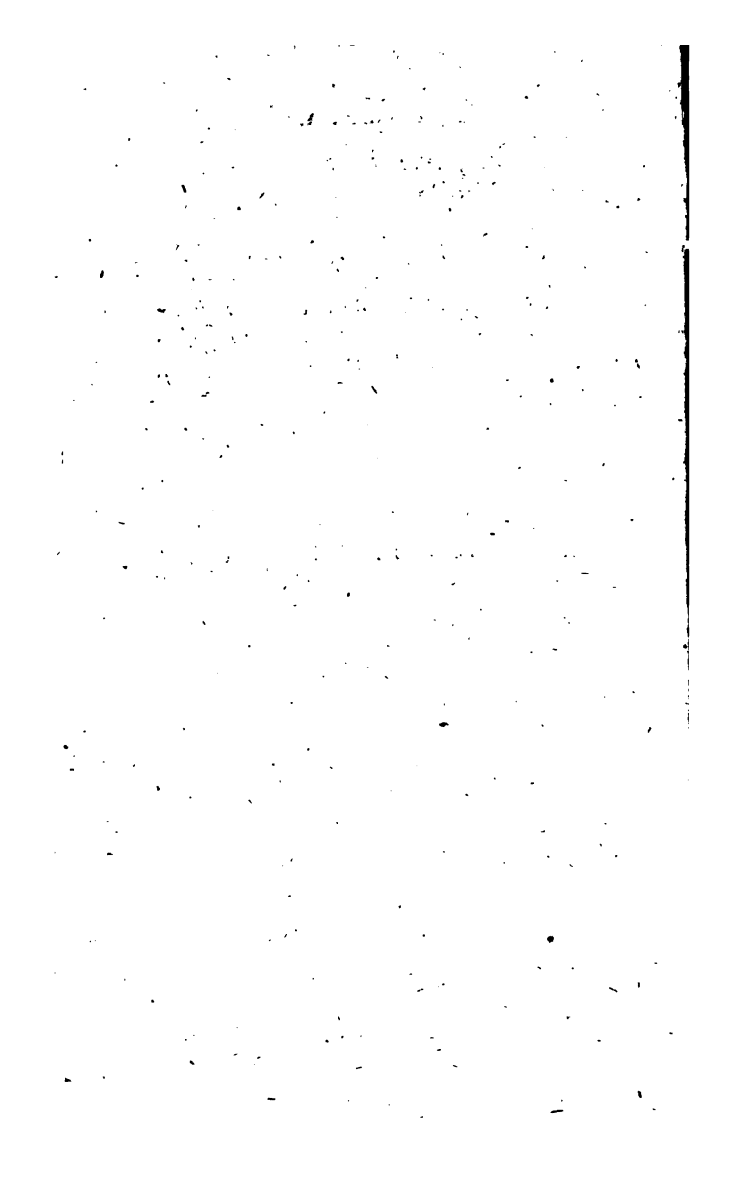
But as impressions of terrour, which sometimes these Objects produce, are often unuseful, because we remain there, and that we are content to have been concerned at them by the bye, and to have formed designs void of conversion, which vanish presently, because we apply them to nothing particular; I thought the means to make us reap some solid profit thereby, were to propose afterwards an exercise of piety, which might be on the one part the natural effect whereto the consideration of these Objects ought to carry us, and which might comprise on the other all the particular resolutions we ought to make for the regulating of our manners; and 'tis that which
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The Preface.

is met with, methinks, in that of Christian Vigilance, which is the Subject of the second Treatise. For Jesus Christ hardly concludes his discourses otherwise, where he represents to his Disciples the terrible Ideas of Death and Judgment, than in perswading them to be Vigilant of themselves. Watch, saith he, by praying always, that you may be worthy to avoid all the Evils which shall arrive, and to appear with confidence before the Son of Man.

Now whosoever shall watch as he ought, shall discover thereby what he ought to do to accomplish his duty, to free himself from the snares of the Devil, to prepare himself for Death, and Judgment, to avoid Hell, and to arrive at that happy Country which ought to be the Object of all our desires.

FIRST



FIRST
TREATISE,
OF THE
Four Last Ends of
M A N.

BOOK I.
Of Death,

CHAP. I.

*That it is strange Men having Death al-
ways before their Eyes, and so great rea-
son to think of it, do think nevertheless
so little of it.*

TIS not onely of the Death of
Martyrs that we may say with
St. Augustine, De Civitat. Dei,
l. 13. c. 4. *That by the admirable Grace of*

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our

our Saviour, the Pain of Sin is become the Instrument of Virtue; 'tis by the Death of all men. Death will be for them one of the most powerful means of their Salvation, and one of the greatest remedies of their Evils, if they can draw the advantages which the divine mercy will procure them by this chastisement which his Justice exercises over them.

Man dies not but because he has Sinned, and it would suffice to Sin no more to think well that he must die. The Scripture it self assures us of it, by discovering to us thereby this secret of Gods bounty towards Sinners. Eccl. 7. 40. *Remember your End, and you will never Sin.*

In effect what is more capable to make man think of himself, and more proper to make him out of Love with the World, to suppress his Pride, to strike him with a holy fear of Gods Judgements, than the thoughts of Death? Also God who saw how much this thought was beneficial for us, hath pleased that it should be renewed in our minds by a number of different objects and actions, which presenting to us continually the Idea of Death, permits us not to forget it, lest we should
turn

Book I. **Of Death.** 3

turn our Eyes willingly another way.

We are not only advised by so many men that we must die, who ever and anon part out of this World; by that of all other Animals to which we have been equalled in this point, in punishment for our sins; by sicknesses which happen to us; by continual weakness of the Body which we experience continually; by infinite accidents which threaten us every moment: we are so likewise by a great part of our actions, which tending to avoid death, ought continually to place the Image thereof before our Eyes.

For what is mans life but a perpetual combat with Death? We Eat only that we may not die for hunger. We Drink that we may not die for thirst. We Sleep that we may not die for want of it. We Labour to withstand Death, which want might cause. We take rest that we may not die with weariness. We are therefore at all turns grappling with Death. And being thus obliged to make continual endeavours to repulse it, it is very strange we should be able to hinder our selves from thinking of it.

Likewise God will not have the impression which Death makes upon the minds of men to be diminished by an artifice, which they make use of in regard of most truths which incommode them ; it is to palliate the Evidence and certainty thereof by affected doubts. For although there is nothing more hard to nature than the necessity of dying, yet is there nothing more sure. We do not flatter our selves upon this score with vain hopes. And the experience of so many Ages, in which we have seen so many Men yield to Death without exception or privilege, does form in all Mens minds so clear a conviction, that even those who have desired to withdraw themselves from the rank of men, and make themselves adored as Gods, have never been so foolish as to think they should never die.

Every one therefore is perswaded he shall die. We receive from all parts continual allarms thereof. And moreover Christian Religion teacheth us, that this so unavoidable Death ought to place us for ever in a state of happiness, or misery, and that these two Eternities which are so different, the one so desirable, and the other so frightful, depend

Book I. **Of Death.** 5

pend on the disposition of the Heart wherein that last moment shall find us: That it will give it self at that instant an irrevocable decree which will decide our Lott for ever, and what renders this decree favourable or contrary, is the use we make of our life here, which is only given us to prepare our selves for it.

Who would not imagin but that men who make a profession of believing these Truths, should be employed continually aboutt hese frightful objects? And indeed 'tis this which God pretends in placing them so frequently before our Eyes. 'Tis what Reason dictates to us, and what it makes us do in some Occasions of much less importance.

We need not advertise Criminals, shut up in Prison, in expectation of Judgment, where their Honour, their Goods, and their Lives are at stake, to think of the danger they are in, of the means to avoid it, of the ways to make their Judges favourable to them: Their State and Condition puts them in mind thereof, and their Thoughts incline them naturally thereunto, without any need of using endeavours to apply themselves to it. But how much more would they busie themselves about it, if they thought

they could advance their Affairs by thinking on it, and that there were no better means to gain their Judges favour, and to render their Cause good, than by having the day of their Trial always in their minds?

This is the Image of Man's Condition, but not of his Conduct. He is a Prisoner, like these Criminals we speak of: for the whole World is Man's general Prison, and we go not out of it but by Punishment, Death being one to which all Men are condemn'd by God's Justice. No Man dies properly of that which Men call a *Natural Death*. Every Death is the Execution of a Decree of God, who condemns us to it. Some are condemn'd to die by the Sword, others by Fire, some by Shipwrack, some by Poyson, some by the Plague, and Fevers, and by other Diseases; and the death of these last, although accompanied with Circumstances less frightful to the Senses, is often more hard and troublesom than the others.

We are in expectation not onely of the Execution of the Decree of Death, which is already given against us; but of another much more terrible, which is not yet pronounc'd, and which should
make

make us happy or miserable for all Eternity.

We know that it might help us much to have the mind fill'd with these thoughts, and to represent to our selves often this last moment which will finish our lives and begin our Eternity. All that environs us puts us in mind thereof. And nevertheless the truth is, that there are very few who think of it, and a great many fewer that think seriously of it. Most Men on the contrary place all their care and study to banish all these objects out of their thoughts; to see death the least they can, to drive away all that represents it lively, and they prosper so well therein, that they all come almost to death, without ever having thought or dreamt of it.

This blindness which men procure themselves is doubtless one of their greatest misfortunes; and the Devil hath no greater means to destroy them, than to nourish them therein, and conduct them thus brutishly to death without reflecting or foreseeing. 'Tis this ought to incline those whose Eyes God opens sometimes to see the misery and danger of this State, to do all possibly they can to dissipate those clouds which

hide these objects from us, of which it is so necessary for us to think; and without doubt one of the best means to succeed therein is, to observe well the wiles which are used, either to banish absolutely out of the mind the remembrance of Death, or to think thereof only in so weak a manner, that it may not be able to make any impression upon the heart, nor hinder any ways the course of its passions.

CHAP. II.

Of the Artifice Men make use of to weaken the Idea of Death; which is, to look upon their Lives as long and certain.

THERE are hardly any People who can hearken without trouble to the Commandment which the Prophet *Isaiah* made in behalf of God to King *Ezechias*, (*Isa.* 38. 1.) to put his affairs in order, and to prepare himself for death: *Dispone domui tuae*. The Image of Death, when both near and certain, does make the most firm and undaunted to quake: And when any one is told, that he hath but very little or no time to live, he is much

Book I. Of Death. 9

much more troubled to moderate the fear he apprehends thereof, than to incline him to think of it.

Every one is moved in these occasions, and pressed not onely to order the affairs of his House, but also those of his Conscience. The most wicked and impious are troubled thereat, and not daring to die as they have lived, they find more safety in making the best use they can of the Actions of Religion they have neglected in their life-time.

'Tis not then through a constancy of the Soul, that Men are so little concerned, during their health, at the fear of death: 'Tis not because they can undergo the sight of it without fear, nor that they can hinder themselves from thinking of it when it presents it self to them with all it hath that's terrible: 'Tis because they represent it not to themselves in their Lives, but by so dim and so confus'd an Idea, that it is not possible to move or stir them.

To weaken and obscure thus the Idea of Death, they make use of divers Inventions, which it is necessary should be discovered. One of the principal ones is, that imagining their Lives very long, they look upon Death, which ought to

terminate it, so far off, that it diminisheth infinitely the Impression that it might make upon their minds.

For how terrible soever an Object may be, we are generally little touched at it when we think it far off; because the mind applying it self to this long Interval which is between us and it, perceives much more the Good of being freed from this Evil during all that time, than the Evil it has reason to apprehend after the expiration of it. We imagine moreover, in regard of these Evils at so far a distance from us, that there will be time enough to think thereof when they shall be nearer us; but yet we can onely enjoy the rest which time permits; and what we do in respect of death is properly there. No Man would die not having considered very well of it. But we imagine we shall think thereof one day or other, and that we shall have time to do it; and upon this false assurance we take all our lives the boldness not to think of it at all.

The Devil speaks not now to us, as he did to our Forefathers, *You shall not die*; this would be too gross a temptation, and no body would be deceived by it: But he tells them, *You shall not die presently.*

sently, you have yet a great while to live : And by this means he deceives almost all the World, because he finds in mens hearts an inclination to be flattered by these vain hopes, through a desire they have to enjoy more quietly some sensible things which they have a mind unto.

This Illusion includes two ; the one, That we conceive the space we promise our selves to live, like something a long time off ; the other, That we assure our selves, without reason, that this space will not be shortned by any of those so many accidents which threaten Mens Lives, and which make the greatest part of them to die much sooner than they thought of. So to dissipate it, we need onely consider, whether we have reason to look upon our Lives as either long or certain. And it is a very hard matter to examine these two Points truly, without being astonish'd at mens blindness.

CHAP. III.

Of the shortness of Life, and the Idea we ought to have of it.

IT is not meant here to convince men of the shortness of their Lives: They cannot oftentimes withstand the evidence which persuades them to it; and they complain sometimes of it, when they find it too short to execute their designs, or that it does not permit them to enjoy as long as they would the objects of their passions.

It is intended to persuade them, that this Life is short in relation to the end for which it is given us, which is to prepare us for Death and Eternity; that in what Age soever we be touched with this thought, it is never too soon to apply our selves thereunto, although we should do nothing else all the remainder of our lives; that we ought to make haste to do it; and that it is a folly to put off this thought to another time: And as the Devil, to dissuade us from it, flatters us commonly with the Idea of a long Life, so we must endeavour to correct this Idea, and to see fully what right we

we have to promise it to our selves.

It would suffice for that to tell men, that labouring to enter into a state of Eternity, no Time that is given us to prepare our selves for it ought to seem long and tedious. There is no Time finite which hath proportion with Eternity, which is endless. A Month, a Day, an Hour, a Minute, have some proportion with thousands of Years; because these thousands of Years comprehend onely a certain number of Months, Days, Hours, and Minutes: but thousands of Years have not any at all with Eternity; because what Multiplication soever can be made, they will never make up the Measure.

Although God should have obliged us to consider many millions of Years upon Death, and to accompany this Consideration with all imaginable Austerities, and with a general renouncing of all Humane Satisfactions, it would be yet much less than to oblige some People, who ought to enter upon some considerable Charge, to think thereof, and to prepare themselves but for one hour.

There is but one Eternal Preparation which can have any relation to Eternal Happiness; and God would be in the
right

right to require it, according to St. *An-
stin, in Psal. 36.* if he would act towards
us with an exact Justice. Whether it
be that we consider the Goods God has
prepared in Heaven for his Elect, or we
consider the Evils wherewith he will pu-
nish the wicked, and which he desires we
may avoid, by the use we shall make of
Life; all time is short to deserve the
one, and to warrant us of the other.

But if we must needs prepare our
selves eternally to obtain the Riches of
Heaven, says this holy Doctor, (*Ibid.*)
when will the time of enjoying it come?
It is therefore necessary that this Prepa-
ration be limited to a certain time, to the
end that this time, being past, we may
obtain that Happiness which shall never
end. But although limited it may be
long, and God might have obliged us
to long Labours and Miseries, to deserve
to be eternally happy: Although those
Labours and Miseries should be for a
thousand years, put them in the Scale
with Eternity, and you shall see they will
be nothing compared with it. Neverthe-
less it is very requisite that this Prepara-
tion which God requires from us, be not
so long. It is not stretched forth to
each of those who begin to consider it,
but

but to what of their Life remains. Now what is mans Life? I do not speak of those whose Age or bad Health puts them every moment in mind of approaching Death: I speak of those who are in good health, and to whom Age permits them to promise themselves in their Life-time all that men can reasonably expect: And by how many think you ought that to be esteemed?

Those who make Treatises, whose Gain or Loss depends on the length of mans Life, build them upon this Rule, confirmed by Experience, That 'tis more rare, that any man, whatsoever he be, considered in any part of his Life, do live twenty years beyond the Age he is of, than that he should die before that term: that is, Take a certain number of men, of what age you will, there will be more of those dead twenty years after, than there will be living. So that each of these men would do prudently to renounce the hopes of a longer Life, provided they should be assured to live twenty years.

But as these Agreements are not in our power, each man ought rather to be persuaded, that he shall not be in this World at the end of twenty years from
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the time he counts from, than that he shall. And 'tis from thence that one ought to judge whether there is reason to believe that the Life of Man is long, and whether there is not just grounds to prepare for Death.

For, is it possible that men can believe that 'tis too much to prepare themselves twenty years for Eternity, and that they can imagine this space of time as too long for that Work? How many several Employments are there in the World, which require as long Preparations? Is there any one who would refuse to lead a laborious and troublesom Life twenty years, that he might become a Prince? And the World, is it not full of People who live a long time in a very toilsom manner, for very small Recompences? Will there be nothing then but Heaven for which we shall find every thing unsufferable?

If men will know what twenty years Hardship is, let them reflect upon those they have already passed, and consider with what swiftness they are fled away. It is hardly a day (said St. *Augustine*, in *Psal.* 3.) since *Adam* was chased from the Terrestrial Paradise: Many Ages are past since that time, it is true; but what are become of them? If you had lived
since

since *Adam's* Banishment until this time, you would think your Life had been but short: Therefore what is twenty years in our eyes? I know very well, that we look upon those which are to come otherwise than those which are past: but 'tis a deceit of our Imagination; they will pass away with the same swiftness: The Torrent of the World hurries them away, and in a trice we shall be amazed to find our selves come to the end. *Greg. Nazianz. Or. 17.*

The Gospel, to explicate to us this brevity, represents to us the whole course of Ages under the Figure of One day, and reckons the time of the Law of Grace but as the Evening and One hour of the day, *Novissima hora*. What part then took up twenty years in this Evening, and in this Last hour?

He who is but twenty years distant from death, is very near; and in stead of concluding that 'tis not yet time to think of Death, he ought to conclude, that 'tis time not to think now of the World, and that what time he hath to live is not worth the Pains. For what is it to be twenty years, more or less, a little richer or poorer; a little more at ease, or incommoded; a little higher, or lower; seeing

seeing that this time being ended, we ought to enter into a state of Eternity, where all these Differences will be destroyed, and where God will make other Differences amongst Men, which will be eternal? Behold what deserves thinking of; I do not say twenty years, but twenty millions of years, because by thinking thereof we may be much more able to contribute to assure and augment our Happiness; and by deferring to think of it, at least we put our selves in danger of being eternally miserable, and we shall certainly be less happy.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Uncertainty of Life.

GOD hath not onely commanded, that the time he gives men to prepare themselves for Death be short, but also that it be uncertain; and that Death being able to surprize them at every moment, they had always reason to fear it. His design thereby hath been to render it always present to us, and to stir us up by this means to a continual Vigilance. 'Tis he himself who hath been willing to advertise

vertise us of it, by telling us in the Gospel, *Watch, because you know neither the day nor the hour; Vigilate, quia nescitis diem neque horam.*

The Fathers, by following this Light, have drawn the same consequence of the incertitude of this Life: Seeing that Life is uncertain, say they, we must not put off being converted; because God, who promised Pardon to those who returned sincerely to him, does not promise it the next day to any one.

'Tis God's great mercy, saith St. *Austin*, (in Psal. 34. item in Psal. 101. 144.) that in advertising us to live well, he hath hidden the day of our death from us, that we may promise our selves nothing for the time to come. For fear, says he, in another place, (in *Joan. tr.* 33.) that men through despair should precipitate themselves yet into more disorder, he has promis'd them the Port of Penance: And for fear that the hope of Pardon should be an occasion of their living evilly, he has made the day of their death uncertain.

But Men enchanted with the love of Wordly things find means to shift off this Counsel of Gods mercy to them. As they fear oftentimes, when there's no reason to fear, they imagin and conceive

ceive assurances, when there is no cause to be assured. What Examples soever they learn every day from People who have been surpris'd by Death, either they will not make Reflection that as much may happen to them, or they suppose without ground, that they shall not be of the number of those miserable Creatures; and thus forming to themselves a cloud which hinders them from seeing the danger which threatens them at every turn, they continue to follow their passions, without being the least amus'd at the fear of Death.

But they condemn those dangers by not seeing them, and on the contrary by acting in such sort as not to see them; to deliver themselves from this illusion, they need only to open their Eyes, and consider seriously that life is as uncertain for us as for others.

There needs no proof to be convinced of this, a few Reflections concerning these things will suffice. There is nothing more common than Death; nor nothing so rare as not to be surpris'd by it. Many are overwhelmed at once by suddain deaths, others fall into sicknesses which presently take away their reason, though they do not take away their lives so soon, and
do

do the same effect as sudden Deaths in what relates to the hindring them from preparing themselves for Death. Gregor. mor. l. 25. c. 2. *Subitum est homini quod ante cogitare non potuit.*

But without any consideration of these accidents which are more rare, it may in one sense be said, that almost all Deaths are sudden and unprovided, because there are few that we have had time to foresee before hand.

The State of Health, and that of Sickness which brings Death is generally followed immediately, and is not separated by any sensible interval: So that the same day sometimes we are well and mortally sick in appearance.

We ordinarily foresee the Fall of Buildings, because we see almost all parts of it; and there are certain Signs to be assured of it, when we doubt. But Mans Body is an Edifice which we cannot visit; 'tis a Machine whose Springs are hidden, and which may be all ready to break and to fall to ruine, without any ones being aware thereof. Such an one thinks he is far from death, who carries it in his Bosom; and such an one is really far from it at this moment, who shall be struck with it the next.

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The Machine of the Body is composed of so many little Parts, of so many Vessels and Springs, that almost any thing will disorder it, and hinder its Motions; and those who know the Structure of it the most exactly, are so far from being surpriz'd that men die so soon and so frequently, that they are astonish'd that they can last for any time.

Let us joyn to the Consideration of the weakness of our Bodies, and this great number of Accidents and Sickneses to which they are subject, the Consideration of God's Providence, which disposes Sovereignly of our Lives and Deaths, and whose Decrees are to us unknown; we shall see more clearly how many Delusions there are to assure our selves of the length of this Life, and to put off thinking of Death to another time than that which God hath given us at present. For they are not properly Sickneses which bring Death with them; 'tis the Decree of God's Will: We are dead before him from the very moment we were born, because he created us at a certain Instant, to make us die exactly at another.

All men, as we have said already, are condemn'd to Death by the Justice of
God,

God, and their Deaths are assigned to certain hours and moments. This Ordinance is executed every day upon a very great number of Persons up and down in the World. Who can then be assured of any day which shall not be his last? We perceive not, said one, any Signs or any Presages of Death. It is very true: But amongst those who ought to die that same day, there are always many who are appointed to die without these Presages and Signs. And thus the confidence we may have not to be of that Number, is rash and groundless.

That which is strange, is, that we only flatter our selves in this sort when we are busied in settling the Affairs of our Salvation: For when we are employed in Humane Affairs, we scarce want the remembrance of the incertainty of this Life; and we are so much the more mindful thereof, as the Interests are greater. We resolve, for example, to hazard some small thing upon another Mans Life: but we are very careful in doing it when it concerns some great and considerable Sum: We will then have Security, because we know not, says one, what may happen. We prevent in these Contracts the Inconveniences that may
arise

arise from Mens Deaths, by a thousand Clauses and Precautions. In fine, we suffer oftentimes certain Losses, for not hazarding great Sums upon other Mens Lives, or our own: So much we are persuaded that there is nothing more uncertain than Life, nor nothing more frequent than to be surprized at Death. Nevertheless, by an incomprehensible subversion of the Mind, when it concerns Eternity, we stifle all fears, we are at quiet, we never dream of the incertainty of this Life, and we live as if it were exposed to no Accidents, and that we were fully assured that it must continue all the time we have promised to our selves.

It is impossible we should not condemn the indiscretion of this Conduct: But we must not stop there: Reason ought to correct the false Ideas wherewith our Imaginations are stuffed. And to hinder our selves from beholding Death at this deceitful distance, which robs it of what it hath that's most terrible; or with this false assurance of not being surprized by it, upon which we rest satisfied; it ought to make us acknowledge, on the contrary, that it is indeed very near us; that it importunes and besieges us on all parts;

parts; that we have occasion to fear every moment and in every place to hear this frightful voice Echoing in our Ears: We must die, we must appear before God, and receive our sentence for all Eternity, there is no more delay. And from thence it is easie to conclude, that we cannot make too much haste to think seriously on it: That we have no time to lose, and that our trouble ought to be, that we have not always been mindful of it.

CHAP. V.

How dangerous it is to put off thinking of Death till our last Sickness.

I pretend not to speak here of some Regular persons, who, having their imaginations too quick, are struck too much with the thoughts of Death: For we allow that these persons do well to bear with their weakness, and to nourish their piety by other objects.

I speak of those to whom these thoughts may be useful, and who nevertheless avoid them. And as their being so remote from thence, may yet

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proceed from diverse causes, we ought to judge thereof differently.

For there are some, in whom this remoteness is an effect of a simple and meer Negligence, and a natural shunning some melancholy Objects, and who yet lead a life exempt from crimes, practising many good works, and desiring sincerely to be with God.

There are some in whom it springs from an ill govern'd spirituality, who love only what comforts or raises the mind, avoiding all that humbles it.

Likewise I will not deny that there are Souls who have no need at all of these thoughts, and which God draws to him by other ways.

But these three dispositions, joyned together, are not so ordinary as that which hinders the thinking of Death, because this Idea troubles the pleasures, and incommodes the passions. Most People omit thinking of Death as they omit to be Converted, and they put off the one and the other until their last sickness, because they can do it no longer.

In vain endeavour we to represent to them the brevity and the uncertainty of mans life. For sudden Deaths, which

which take away absolutely the means of thinking of it, are not so frequent as those which allow some time to prepare for it; the love they have for worldly things, being always more strong than the fear of an Accident, which they look upon as seldom hapning, does never permit them to think of death, until some violent Sickness take away the means of deferring it any longer. 'Tis not that all that is distinct in their minds; for they love to conceive these kind of things but confusedly: But it is easie to see that 'tis in effect what hapned therein, and what caused the ground of their repose.

As this state and condition is very common, it is good to examine it particularly, and to endeavour to give it the just horror which is due to it; and 'tis what these following Considerations may make appear.

First, It is evident, that this Disposition includes a resolution of hazarding Damnation, if we happen to be surprized by an unprovided Death, being we take no precaution against Death which overwhelms all at once. And this resolution is so Foolish in it self, that men never commit the like in respect of

Wordly things. For example, have we seen a Prince so foolish to play his Kingdom against a Straw, to put Life and Honour in danger that he may gain a false Diamond? Nevertheless these are follies infinitely less than that of exposing our selves to the hazard of being lost for ever, and becoming everlastingly miserable, for any temporal thing whatsoever. 'Tis this nevertheless that all those do, who expect to think of them when they shall be dangerously sick.

'Tis not only a Follie, 'tis a very Criminal one, which angers God by the Disdain which it offers; which violates the Command he gives us of being converted: which abuses his Patience and Mercy, which deserves that he refuse at our Deaths the favours we have neglected in our life time.

Moreover this Follie is grounded upon divers Errors, which every one may easily discover if they will. It is true, that sudden Deaths are more rare than others. But how many are those, which Men call not sudden, to which they cannot prepare themselves by the Sacraments? How many which do so overwhelm the mind by the violence of sickness,

ness, that it is impossible to think seriously of any thing, or to practise actions of Religion but after a brutish manner?

Do men think that it is very easie for a Soul, whose whole attention is busied about the Sentiment of her corporal evils, to consider of objects whereunto she is absolutely a Stranger, to recollect with bitterness her whole life; to acknowledge and condemn all her former faults? On the contrary, is it not clear, both by Experience and Reason, that almost all men are never less able to think of Death, than when they are nearest it; and that most of their exterior actions of Piety in this Condition, may be indeed, in good men, marks of the disposition wherein Sickness found them, but in others nothing but the effects of Custom; which all those who make profession of any Religion, whatever it be, have, to die with the Ceremonies of their Religion; and even oftentimes of the weakness which renders the Diseased incapable of resisting those who brought them thither?

But although we had in this condition all the liberty of mind that we could desire or wish for, can we imagine we ought to have any great confidence in these te-

testimonies of Conversion, which go but just before Death? That is not the Judgment the Church has always given thereof: She, on the contrary, has always been doubtful of them, and has endeavoured to persuade her Children not to confide in them: She has sent those to do Penance she had reconciled in this condition, as if they had not received Absolution, esteeming almost as nothing all they have done during their being sick. Divers Reasons may be brought; but I shall content my self with alledging one, which we have already made use of in another Treatise.

'Tis, That in the common way Mans heart does not change at once the Object and the End: We may well change in a moment our outward Actions; but Love, which enjoys the principal place in the Heart, scarcely changes in a moment; it is requisite that it be weakned by little and little, and that there be another to take its place by degrees. 'Tis thus that Humane Passions are changed; and God, who will that the Operations of his Grace be not sensibly distinguish'd from those of Nature, observes ordinarily the same method: He begins to shake the Heart by Fear, before he touch it with his

his Love; and oftentimes he touches it a long time by some Principles of Love, before he become Master of it by an overruling Love, which turns the Heart towards him as towards its last End, and which delivers it from the bondage of the Love of Creatures. Thus as the Conversion of dying Sinners cannot pass by these degrees, it must needs be miraculous to be true. The Church despairs not of this Miracle; and 'tis for this reason that she grants the Sacrament to dying Persons: but she fears very much that the Sentiments which appear in Sinners who are in this condition, are onely small beginnings of Fear, or of the Love of God, which are not sufficient for a true Conversion. 'Tis this which obliges Sinners not onely to labour, but also to labour seriously for their Salvation, that their Love may have time to encrease, and to arrive at a state wherein we may say they are truly converted.

Father *Jursens*, of the Society of *Jesuit*, in his *Book of the Knowledge of the Love of Jesus Christ*, (*lib. 2. sect. 19.*) does alledge another Reason against those who defer their Conversion until Death, which is worthy to be related here; and it is in these Terms. *My second Reason is, That*

thou oughtest not to put off thy Repentance, because thou knowest that to do it, whensoever thou dost attempt it, thou must necessarily have an efficacious Grace. And who has told thee that God will give it thee then? Hast thou assurance from him that it shall not be wanting? Expect also, that delaying to quit thy sin, and this sin sticking to thee by its proper weight, and swaying thee by a certain Moral Necessity to commit others, and so heaping sins upon sins, and crimes upon crimes, thou makest that God will be less disposed to give thee this Grace, and, as St. Paul says, *Secundum duritiam tuam & cor impœnitens thesaurizas tibi iram in die iræ*; Thou obligest him conformly by the hardness and the obstinacy of thy heart, to refuse it thee at the day that thou shalt precisely have need of it for thy Salvation.

Also God hath been so far from promising Sinners to give them at their death these sort of Graces, how necessary soever they may be to them for their Conversion, that he hath promised, on the contrary, in some manner, not to give them to them; seeing he declares in the Book of *Proverbs*, that he will laugh at these sinners at the time of their death, *Prov. 1. 26. Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo*; that he will laugh at them, & sub
sannabo.

ſanabo, and that he will not hear them when they call on him; *Tunc invocabunt me, & non exaudiam*; which denotes at the ſame time, both that theſe inveterated ſinners do not forbear to practice outward Actions of Religion, and that they do not obtain God's Mercy by theſe Actions.

Finally, This Liberty of Mind which ſome have in their laſt Sickneſs, and which thoſe we ſpeak of look upon as an aſſured Means to their Salvation, is ſo far from being an help to repair all the paſt diſorders of this Life, that it gives leave often to the greateſt Temptation which is able to attack Men in this ſtate, which is that of an exceſs of Terrour, which caſts the Soul into aſtoniſhment and deſpair; and there are none who are more expoſed to it, than thoſe who have never deſired to think of death whiſt they were in health.

'Tis a ſtrange thing but to ſee our ſelves environed with deadly Griefs, to open at once our eyes and behold theſe terrible Objects, on which we have never dar'd to look, and to find nothing but Crimes in our Conſciences. Thoſe who have employed themſelves moſt with the thoughts of death, do grant that there is

an infinite difference betwixt seeing at a distance, and seeing near at hand.

The stoutest do give back when they are in this condition : What then must be the Convulsions of a miserable Soul, which, being voluntarily blind her whole life, thinking onely on what might divert her, comes on a sudden to discover Death, Devils, Judgment, and Hell ?

Thus there are nothing but bottomless Pits and Precipices on all sides, for those who defer thinking of Death until they are so near it : All things are equally dangerous to them, stupidity and liberty of Mind, forgetfulness and the remembrance of Death.

We are then so far from being able to look upon this Condition as favourable to recover the Grace we have lost, that, on the contrary, it is visible it puts us in great danger of losing it. We ought to be so far from dispensing with our selves from being prepared for Death during our Health, by putting it off until we be forced to it by Sicknefs ; that we ought, on the contrary, to think continually thereof whilst we are in health, that we may not be obliged to think of it being sick.

And lastly, We must be so far from expecting

expecting to repair by those Actions of Piety which we may do in this extremity, the Disorders in which we have passed this Life, that we must endeavour, on the contrary, to obtain from God, by long exercises of Piety, the Grace not to faint or lose courage in these last Tentations, but to practice with Piety these last Actions of Religion.

CHAP. VI.

That the Thought of Death is not only helpful to free us from Sin, but also a puissant Remedy to preserve us from falling into it: That 'tis good to represent to our selves the state of Dying Men.

THE last inconvenience which happens to those who being unwilling yet to forsake Sin, banish out of their minds all thoughts of Death, and leave them to their last Sickness, is common with those who fly these thoughts through a wicked Delicateness, or a false Spirituality, which gives them a taste only for the objects which comfort and puff them up. 'Tis for want of thinking upon Death, that they are deprived of
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one of the greatest succours, and one of the most efficacious means that God hath given us, to free us from the love of perishable things, to make us esteem those which are Eternal; to Judge well of the World and all that is therein; to moderate our passions, and lastly to flye Sin.

'Tis true, this may be said of all objects of fear which Religion proposes unto us, which are all needful to uphold the Soul against Temptation. But it is certain, that amongst these objects, that of Death has a particular force to pacifie the passions, by an impression of terroure: For it does not only comprehend the Ideas of Gods Judgement, and of Hell; that is, of what is most terrible; but it paints it likewise in the imagination by more lively and more sensible Images than those other objects, because it enters there by our senses, and being often Spectators of Mens Death, we are also oftentimes Witnesses of the state dying Men are found in.

Now as those who have made Human Laws, having been willing to dissuade Men from crimes by the fear of punishments, have had a care that they should be accompanied with certain dismal and
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Tragical Pumps, the sight of which might cause Terrour in the Spectators; God, who had likewise a design that Death, to which all Men are Condemned, should serve to keep them in their Duties, hath been pleased that the sight thereof should be frightful; thereby to make them enter into themselves again, and consider what they are. Thus as it is necessary for this reason to assist at mens Death, so is it also to represent it to themselves, and to strike their imagination by Circumstances which accompany it.

There are divers sorts. But we will speak only of those which happen in Mens Deaths which are called happy, to the end nothing may be said which is not seen in all Deaths. Methinks there is not any more to be desired than that where we see Men die in their Beds, in the midst of their Children, and Kinsfolks, and Friends. Nevertheless there would be many things in this Spectacle which might be capable to frighten us, if we did not see it daily by an unfortunate Address in others, without dreaming that we our selves must suddenly pass through the same state.

It is more dreadful than we imagine to
see.

see them stretched forth upon a Bed, a Cross in the hand, expecting the stroke of Death, and the execution of the sentence given against all Men; to see that not only those who environ us, but all Creatures together are unable to help us; to feel Death which seizes upon us by little and little, trying to overwhelm us, and lastly, to see our selves perish and be annihilated in respect of this World.

It is good to consider, that we all see our selves before we die in the lowest rank of Men, that is to say, in a state the most vile that can be amongst Men. There is, for example, not any King whatsoever at the point of Death who would not wish to be the meanest of his Subjects. And there is not so miserable a Slave who would change his fortune for that of a Kings, if he had but a Quarter of an Hour to live: He is then in effect in this extream lowness. He is already deprived of all his Human felicity, and he has already experienced this Death, before that of the Body.

Thus all the Grandeurs and all the Pleasures have for limit, even from this life, the lowest degree of meaness and misery. That is the end which attends the
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the most eminent life of this World. A dying Prince may say, that from that moment which begun his life even to Eternity, there is no more Human greatness nor pleasure for him. He does not only see them no more for the time to come, but he sees them not likewise in that which is past. These objects as to him change their nature, and appear to him only as vain phantomes which vanish a way; and if he have some sense of Religion, it is rather a weight which overthrows him with the fears of the reckoning he is going to make to God.

All men then are reduced before they die to the last degree of poverty, that is to be deprived of all good, and all Human pleasure, and to see themselves in an entire lack of power of ever enjoying them; which does not happen in some extremity of misery whereto Man may be reduced, not being as yet ready to die:

These are only the outward marks of Death; and I have no design thereby, but to terrifie the senses by the Image of the outward part of this state; but the inward is much more frightful and terrible. Which is what we shall endeavour

deavour to unfold, to the end that the Idea of Death may have more force to stop our passions.

CHAP. VII.

The First manner of considering Death; which is to look upon it as the destruction of the World for every dying Person. The terrible effects of this destruction upon the Soul.

BESIDES the cunning which Men have, never to consider Death but as at a great distance, or not to look upon it but in others, troubling themselves the least they can about dying mens condition, they have yet another which reaches very far; which is, they imagine to themselves so gross and so confused an Idea thereof, that it hides all that is terrible from them.

For they scarcely conceive this state, but as a want of knowledge, and a separation from the commerce of this life; so that when they say a Man is Dead, they mean only we see him no more, and that he has no concern as to the affairs of this World. In a word, they

they ground the Idea of Death, only upon what we cease to do in dying, and not upon what they begin to do and perceive at the hour of Death. Nevertheless this Idea is not far from representing to us what is most terrible in Death.

It is very true, that Death is a deprivation of life and human Actions, but 'tis a privation which is perceived, and which produces very strange effects in the Soul.

To comprehend these effects, we must consider, that whilst the Soul is united to the body, her attention is divided by several sorts of sentiments, knowledges and passions, she perceives the objects which act upon the body, according to the divers ways of acting, and these different ways of perceiving them are called sentiments or actions of the senses. Upon this she forms the Ideas of all things. She is likened thereto by her passions, and she is always busied about many of these objects.

She is not only busied, but she builds and relies upon them, when she is not absolutely addicted to God. For being not made to be able to uphold
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her self, she must necessarily seek some means to do it out of her self; she is born to know and love, and she does not find enough in her self whereby to satisfy these inclinations, she must therefore fill with something else the Vacuity she perceives in her self.

Some of these objects make very agreeable impressions upon her Sense; others content her Curiosity and Vanity; others comfort her, persuading her against those which are troublesome; others nourish her hopes; others hearten her against her fears. The Soul then is inclin'd towards all these objects: She relies thereon: She is bound to them so, that she cannot free her self from them without grief and trouble.

Oftentimes she is not aware of these Inclinations, but begins to feel them by little and little, when she comes to be separated from what she loves; because she being deprived thereof makes her sensible in proportion as her Inclination is; according to this Maxim of St. *Anselm*, We lose not without grief any thing, except we enjoy it without passion; *Hoc sine amore adterat, quod sine dolore distcedit.*

There are very few who have not a great quantity of these Inclinations:

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And although they are not well known but by the actual separation from the Objects, we may be able to conceive something of them by separating them by thought, and by imagining that we are deprived of them by some accident.

If we thought, for example, not to put our trust in the Objects of Sight, and that they contributed nothing to the tranquillity of the Soul; let us imagine in what state we shall be, if through blindness we were deprived of it, and we shall see, that we were effectively fixed to it, seeing that we look upon this state as one of the greatest Evils which can befall us.

The sole Sight of Men does comfort us, because we always see in them a certain ground of compassion capable of giving us some assistance in our necessities, which at least nourisheth our hopes. Now hopes cause a kind of joy, according to the Apostle, *Spe gaudentes*.

Things themselves which are troublesome to the Soul on one side, and which cause in her Motives of Fear, Aversion, Despair, Envy, do nevertheless buoy her up on the other, because these Passions are not all together brought to remain without action, and that the Imagination

nation furnisheth them always with some means or hope of being satisfied. Now the diligent searching into these means, or the hopes of obtaining what we desire, by busying the Soul, diverts and comforts her.

'Tis something for her to strive or aim at something, seeing she can aim at nothing but what she looks upon as a Good; and whilst she does so, she hopes to obtain it.

All those Objects to which the Soul is carried by her Senses, by her Imagination, by her Understanding, or by her Passions, are her Riches and her Wealth; which shews that those we call poor, are yet very rich in these kind of Goods. Although they have no Palaces, and want even Houses, they have the Heavens, the Sun, and the Stars, the sight whereof is so excellent, that it hath caused St. *Austin* to say, That 'tis a greater satisfaction for a poor man to see the Heavens and the Stars, than for a rich man to see his gilded Rooms.

We are encouraged in this manner whilst we live, by the loss of certain Goods, by means of others, true or false, which we have, or which we hope for. And as the Body finds always something
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which sustains it, even in falling to the ground through weariness, it finds there something to uphold it; even so the Soul, when weak and feeble, makes her self always some Prop in this Life; and when she has none that's real, she forms imaginary ones, which, absolutely vain as they are, do nevertheless overstay her.

This need of Humane help is not particular to wicked men; it is necessary in some degree for good men: For there is scarcely any one so perfect, who has not yet an inclination to something. The just are sometimes weak. Therefore the weak, saith *St. Austin, in Psal. 40.* endeavour always to repose upon some terrestrial thing, because a continual attention to God tires them too much: They seek therefore Humane helps, to refresh themselves thereby, as at divers Pauses. They are at quiet in their Houses, in their Family, Wives, Children, in their small Stock, their Lands, in a Close they have planted, and in a small Building which they have made.

Behold Mans state in this Life, and this state may help to comprehend what Death is, and what Effects it produceth. For we need onely imagine, that 'tis nothing else but a Rupture of all that fixeth
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the Soul to Creatures; that is, a general separation of all the Objects of the Senses, of all the Pleasures we find there, of all Humane Ties; and lastly, that 'tis an absolute deprivation of all that we love in this World. A man that dies does not lose onely what we call Riches; he loses the Heavens, the Sun, and the Stars, the Air, the Earth, and all the rest of Nature: He loses his Body, and all his Sentiments, wherein the Soul took delight: He loses his Friends, Kinsfolks: He loses all Men: He loses all Support and Assistance, and generally all the Objects of his Passions and Desires.

In truth, if the Soul, which is yet so linked to these Objects, find her self bound to God by a holy Love, although the rupture of all these Ties cause in her some trouble, and that she bear the being deprived of Creatures with grief, by so much more, as because of some Inclinations which remain, she cannot yet reunite in God all the power she hath of Loving; she will nevertheless not fall into despair. This excessive Inclination buoys her up; and her Love towards God becoming stronger and more acting, comforts her through hopes of being reunited presently, and plunged into that
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Abyss of Bounty, which is only capable to satisfy all the capacity which she hath to love.

But who can conceive the condition a miserable Soul finds her self in, which comes to be snatched away by Death from all the Objects of her Inclinations, and from all that upheld her in this Life; and which finds nothing in her self which she can trust to? The inclination she hath to love, and to enjoy what she loved, becomes without comparison more lively and more ardent; and yet all she had loved leaves her, and flies away out of her sight with an eternal flight, no hopes being left of ever possessing it again. She loses all, and finds nothing; all sinketh under her, all disappears, all vanisheth.

It is not possible in this World to comprehend perfectly so wretched a state: All that can be said to give an Idea of it, is, That it is a terrible Lapse of the Soul, by the subtraction of all her Props; that 'tis an horrible Hunger, by the deprivation of all her Nourishments; that 'tis an infinite Vacuity, by the annihilation of all that replenish'd her; that 'tis an excess of Poverty, by the entire loss she hath of all Goods; that 'tis a dismal Solitude,

Solitude, by the separation wherein she finds her self from all Union and Society; that 'tis a frightful Desolation; that 'tis a cruel Destruction, by the sad rupture of all her Inclinations.

We must not fancy Death in most part of Men as a Privation of all Worldly things which may be insensible to the Soul. On the contrary, when she is addicted to the World, as almost all Men are, she is sensible of Death in so very a lively manner, that all the Grievs we experience in this Life are nothing, compared to that. For whereas when the Soul is in the Body, and that she acts dependently on her Organs, a multitude of Melancholy Objects scarce make more impression upon her than one single Object; because not being able to conceive so many things at once, she must necessarily distribute her attention amongst divers Objects, or form to her self a certain confused Idea, which she esteems onely one. The Soul, on the contrary, having acquir'd by Death a quite contrary Activeness from that she had being yet in the Body, perceives distinctly and severally all her Losses; the Sentiment of one stifles not that of another; she applies her self to all: Each Inclination

Inclination produceth its Vacuity and Grief, which is not diminished by the Vacuity and Grief which another produceth.

These griefs and bitterneſſes of Death which are produced by inclinations begin in ſome in this life it ſelf in ſome degree, when they ſee themſelves ready to be ſeparated from ſome objects of their paſſions. And 'tis that makes the Scripture ſay: *Ecclus. 41. C. 1. O Death! how thy remembrance is bitter to a Man in peace and plenty of riches!* But there are ſome in whom they do not produce this effect during life, and who die yet quietly in appearance; which is ſeen in Poor People, who die almoſt all without any regret to life, becauſe being preſſed by the ſentiments of their evils, they think to find ſome eaſe in Death: It happens alſo to many others that they are not ſenſible of their proneneſſes, becauſe they have ſome others more prevalent which buſie them. But after Death it will be otherwiſe. All proneneſſes or propenſities will be awakened. They will make themſelves be perceived, and that in manner proportioned to the activity of the Soul, and the rigour of Gods Ju-
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stice; which will cause in them this continual Death which St. *Austin* would denote, when he said, We cannot say of them that they are either Dead or Alive, but that they die always. *De Civitat. Dei*, l. 13. c. 11. *Nunquam Vives, Nunquam Mortuus, sed sine fine Morientes.*

CHAP. VIII.

Reflections arising from this manner of considering Death. That all we have to do in this World is to prevent our natural Death by an Evangelical one.

THE Consideration of this State, so dismal and so terrible, ought not to produce in our minds a barren and fruitless astonishment: We must endeavour to render it useful, by Reflexions which may be drawn from thence to govern Life by, and to judge truly of all that passeth in the World.

First, This Consideration makes us penetrate the sense of St. *Paul's* saying, *Rom.* 8. 6. *Prudentia carnis mors est*; that is to say, The love of carnal things is death to the Soul: For that does not onely mean

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mean that this Love merits the death of the Soul, as a Chastisement or Punishment: Likewise as the same Apostle says, *Stipendium peccati mors*, Death is the stipend of Sin; the meaning of this is, That this Love is the death or the punishment it self of the Soul; because its Object coming to be taken away by the death of the Body, there needs nothing more to change it into Torment and Grief, seeing that Grief is nothing but the fear of wanting what we love. Thus the Propensities which Death finds in Souls are of themselves her Torments, and eternal Torments if they last always, as they do in wicked Persons.

This Consideration makes us comprehend what is said in the Book of *Wisdom*, chap. 1. v. 16. *That the Impious call Death by their Works and their Words, they think it their Friend, and they make alliance with it.* For what do we else in the World, but fix our selves the most we can to Creatures? And what is that, but searching after Death more and more?

What St. Paul says, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. That Avarice is the root of all evil, and that some, abandoning themselves thereunto, engage themselves in many troubles, *inseruerunt se doloribus multis*, hath yet the

same sense: They engage themselves in many Troubles, because they are engaged in many Affections; they are straitly linked to Creatures, and these Ties are the Sources of Grievs and Troubles, sometimes in this World, and always in the World to come.

What a blindness is it then to look upon the Possession of Creatures, plenty of Riches, Humane Honours, great Employments, much Business, Pomp, Splendor, Reputation in the World, and all that flatters our Senses, and Mens Vanity, as a Happiness? Alas! are we happy by swallowing Poisons, and then must have our Bowels presently taken out? Are we happy by fixing our selves to the Wheel upon which we ought to suffer Punishment? What can produce in the Soul all these Objects of Covetousness, but strong Ties and Obligations, but strait and strict Engagements? And what will these Ties and Obligations produce, when Death shall come and separate us from these Objects, but terrible Grievs? We love this Bed of Humane Consolations, whereon our Infirmitie resteth; and yet this Bed will become all Fire for those who shall not leave it before death. We love not the
World

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World Scot-free; the Love of the World becomes necessarily a Punishment, because the World slips from us, and we cannot but be afflicted to lack what we love.

It is easie after this to understand why it is said in the Gospel, That the Kingdom of God belongs to the Poor of Spirit; *Beati pauperes spiritus, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum*: These poor People being those who are not tied to the World, and who desire nothing of it; it is evident they have not onely right to the Kingdom of Heaven, as all just men have, but that they are in a state to possess it, and that nothing shall hinder them from enjoying it. Their Hearts shall not be torn in pieces by the deprivation of Creatures, whereto Death shall reduce them, seeing they shall not be linked to them; and Love, which is prevalent in them towards God, finding nothing in them to be destroyed, will straightways possess it self of their Souls, and render them in this manner fully happy. It is not the same with those who shall be rich at their death, that is, who shall yet have strong Ties to Creatures: Although with them they may have the Holy Ghost in their Hearts, neverthe-

less the Kingdom of God is not yet for them, so long as they are in this State. If they have right to it, the possession of it is forbidden them, until these secret Ties be wholly unloosed.

Let Men do what they will, if they will enter into the Kingdom of God, they must be brought to Poverty, either in this World, or the next; seeing that this Kingdom belongs onely to the Poor, and no Cupidity can have entrance there. But there is this difference betwixt Poverty which may be acquired in this Life, and that whereunto the Just shall be reduced in the next, by the destruction of their Affections: The first costs infinitely less; If it is accompanied with some Grief, 'tis proportioned to the State of this Life, which is a time of Mercy, and of the condition of the Soul as yet united to the Body, which hath onely weak and languishing Sentiments. But the Grievs which shall purifie the Soul after death, being proportioned to the Activity of a Soul separated from the Body, and in the time of the other Life, which is a time of Rigour, will be quite otherwise lively and sensible.

We must not then believe that Death is equally hard to the Poor and Rich in Spirit :

Spirit: For the Pains of Death spring, as I have said, from the separation of Creatures; this separation afflicts onely those who love them, and not those who do not: it is onely painful to those who have some Obligation to break, and not to those whose Obligations or Ties are already broken. Those who are dead to the World during this Life, die no more in dying; Death is to them but a Source of Life: But those whom Death finds yet absolutely wedded to the World, feel necessarily the Pains of Death; seeing that Love it self which lives in them, being deprived of its Object, becomes a Torment and a Death.

'Tis upon these so evident Truths that the Prayer St. Paulinus made to St. Ambrose, to teach him how to die before his death, by an Evangelical death, and to prevent, by a voluntary separation of Life, the Natural separation which shall be made of the Body and Soul by Death, is grounded; *Doces me mortem istam Evangelicam prius emori, quam carnalem resolutionem voluntario praeveniamus excessu.* Aug. Epist. 249.

'Tis in effect all we have to do in this World: For seeing we must necessarily die, and that it is so dangerous a thing

to put off doing it to another time, our Interest it self does it not incline us to free our selves as much as we possibly can from all the Ties which link us to Creatures, and to avoid contracting any new ones, to the end we may not expose our selves in dying to these terrible Pains ?

CHAP. IX.

The Second manner how to consider Death, which is to look upon it as the End of our Time in this World, and our Entrance into Eternity. Sentiments which this double Consideration will produce in the Soul.

ONE of the strangest Visions in the *Apocalypse*, is that of the Angel who will swear, as St. John says, *Apoc. 10. 7.* by him who lives World without End, *That there will be no more time ; Quia tempus non erit amplius.* Now if God do not give this Sentence by an Angel to every Soul which leaves the Body, he makes her know it by a lively impression of his Light, which makes her understand her time is finished, that there shall be no more for her, that the term wherein he has limited his Mercies is arrived, and that

that her State is stopped for all Eternity.

This Light causing her to make in a moment the just Comparison betwixt Eternity and Time, makes her see clearly, that all the Ideas she has had thereof even till then, were infinitely short of Truth; that her Imagination had given to Time, and to things temporal, Length, and a phantastick Greatness; and that she had, as it were, annihilated Eternity, and Eternal Goods, by the weakness and obscurity of the Ideas which she imagined and had formed thereof. The Soul condemns then all these thoughts; she is astonish'd at her Blindness; and changes entirely her Prospects and Judgments.

Nothing that's Temporal can seem Great to her; nor nothing that's Eternal, Little; she enters by a quick apprehension into the truth of what *St. Austin* said, *De Civ. Dei*, l. 12. c. 12. That all Finite Space, compared to Eternity, which hath no end, ought not onely to be little valued, but ought not to be valued at all.

This Comparison of Eternity with Time, which the Soul makes at the moment of separation from the Body annihilates then in her sight the reality of the present World, with all its Goods and Evils, and suffers nothing to subsist

more, as real and solid, but the Goods or Evils which are immovable and eternal.

It will not only be the Just and Elect who shall judge so of Eternity and Time: It will be the Wicked and Reprobate also: They will have almost the same understanding of Mind, but there will be nothing more different than the disposition of their Hearts.

Those who shall be perfectly Just, will not trouble themselves at all to see disappear from before them temporal Goods, because they love them not; and they will be fill'd with joy at the ineffable Grandeur of Eternal Goods, which they shall enjoy without hinderance.

Those to whom there shall rest some Ties for the World, shall undergo very great Pains, by being deprived of these Goods, by the delay of their Beatitude, and by other means whereby it shall please God to purifie them. But amongst all these Pains, the Love they shall have for God will maintain them in perfect Peace, so that as they would willingly suffer all the Evils of this Life to advance one moment their Happiness, they would not for Felicity it self go out of the State wherein Justice shall have plac'd them, contrary to God's Order.

These

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These will be the thoughts of the chosen in respect of Time and Eternity; but these two objects will excite many others in the damned.

Truly they shall know the wretchedness of all temporal things they have loved, but they shall not forbear for all that to love them. And 'tis that which shall produce this hunger whereof we have spoken.

They shall know the greatness and the solidity of Heavenly goods, and they shall see themselves wanting power to love them, also they know they cannot be possessed by any but those who love them.

For, as *St. Francis Salas* observes, lib. 10. of the love of God, Chap. 1. one of the greatest punishments which God will make the wicked suffer, will be to make them know in part the infinite perfections of his Divine Essence, by leaving their criminal Will without the power of loving them.

This ardent love for temporal things, will then be only in the wicked; and the love of Eternal things in the good. But the sight of wretchedness of all Temporal things, and the reality of all that's Eternal, will be common both to the

the good and to the bad. And 'tis a general disposition into which all Souls enter when they leave the body.

Thus it is that Souls will look upon time, and all it comprehends, in seeing it in it self: But this same sight will produce another much different, which will discover to them the price of time in relation to Eternity.

Time is so far from appearing to them by this sight vile and base, that it will on the contrary appear the greatest and the most important thing in the World, as including Paradise and Hell, and all the effects of the mercy and justice of God. They will see that all this has been in their hands by the means of time; it being only thereby that we can deserve by our good actions the goods which Gods mercy hath promised to his Friends, or bring upon us by our crimes the punishments which his Justice prepares for his Enemies.

At what price, think we, will a Soul penetrated by this light, and measuring time by this double Eternity of happiness and misery, value the least part of it? And at the price of how many thousand years of the most rigorous Penance would she re-
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deem some few hours and moments?

Who then can conceive the state whereinto a miserable Soul falls, when having this Idea of grandeur, and the importance of time, she sees at once the good use she might have made, and the bad use she hath made of it, and that she knows by a lively impression of Gods light, that her time is past; that she has no more to hope for; that the door of his mercy is shut against her for ever; that she must be judged according to her present state, without hopes of alteration? Ah! if the just themselves, who shall not have made that use they ought of their time which God hath given them, and who shall have contracted some spots which shall delay their happiness, shall conceive a grief infinitely greater then all those they can experience in this life, tho comforted by the assurance God shall give them that they shall be cleansed from their stains; what can be said of that of the wicked, who shall see that there will be no remedy at all for the terrible wickedness they shall have pulled up on themselves by the evil use of time? What repentance for them, what tearing, and rentings of the heart, what Abiss of despair?

CHAP. X.

Reflections which ought to be made in this life, upon the considerations that ought to be had then of Time and Eternity.

THese are not vain speculations. We shall all pass through some of these states. We shall all have these thoughts of the greatness of time in relation to Eternity, of the wretchedness of it in relation to what's good and bad in this World. We shall all hear this decree which shall be pronounced to each of us at the hour of our Death, *There is no more time for you:* and Death it self is only the execution of this decree. For to die is to finish the time which hath been given us, and which will never be given us again. Let us not then expect to know the price of time, 'tis not needful we do. Let us not despise it, whilst we have it, to regret it eternally, when we shall have it no more. Let us prevent these thoughts and sentiments which we shall necessarily have then. These thoughts are not less true at present, than they will be at another day, and we

we shall be deprived of them one day because they have been always true.

What will be our thoughts when we shall have but an hour or two to live, and that it will come into our minds, In two hours my time will be ended, the door of Gods mercy will be shut against me? Alas! Why do not these thoughts at present make the same impression upon us? For, is it not always true, that perhaps in an hour our time will be ended, *perhaps* in a year, in two, but assuredly in a certain number of years? must this perhaps, or this small space of time, make so great a difference in our disposition? These disproportions are only between finite greatneses. But the difference betwixt finite and infinite is always the same. Infinity has nothing of time. We must therefore look always upon that moment, with the same fear, whether we be an hour, a day, a year, or many years distant from it. But let us not insist upon a frivolous fear which hath no consequence. Let us consider what we would then have done, in the midst of life what would we do if we were to live again, in the exercises of piety which we shall prescribe our selves, if it were in our choice to dispose yet once of our time,

in the opinions which we had then of our former life; let us at least dispose of what remains according to the considerations we shall have in that time.

Let us learn at the end of our time to judge of the price of time; and from the price of time to judge of the life of the World and of our own. For to what end do we employ it, or to what end have we our selves employed it hitherto? What do we with this so precious time? Some pass it in apparent disorders, others in vain amusements, others in chimerical designs and unprofitable labours, others know not what to do with it, and endeavour only to lose it. We part with it at the first coming. We suffer it to be taken from us without complaining. We are liberal of nothing but that. We think those wise men who waste it entirely, in hazarding their lives vainly; and those generous, who lose it through an opinion of Honour. Mens lives are at all prices, and they venture them often for nothing, that is, they venture them against a trifle.

The conduct of Wordly Men is founded upon this senseless commerce. The Devil in the shape of all visible Creatures

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Creatures offers them I know not what pleasures, I know not what honours and dignities. And for I know not what they give him their time, that is, their eternity, and their all. If we have formerly done it, let us forbear doing so hereafter, and think our selves happy that we have detected this illusion, having yet time to remedy it. But as it consists in making us forget the price of our life, let us mend and rectify this forgetfulness by thinking upon Death, that is to say, on the end of this time which makes known the value of it.

If we are accustomed to behold Death with this consideration, it will make a quite contrary impression upon our mindes. For from whence comes this indifferency, and this coldness with which we speak and hear men speak of Death, but only that we conceive almost nothing by the term of Death? If we say, for example, such an one is Dead, or that ten thousand Men died in a battel, we have no other Idea in our mind, but that we shall never see those Men more, and that they are become incapable of either helping or hurting us. But doubtless we shall be otherwise concerned, if we considered

considered that that favourable time wherein Gods mercy was open to them, was taken from them; and that in regard of the greatest part of them, the same stroke which gave them Death shut the door against them. If we were, say I, full of these thoughts, we should have a quite contrary Idea of War then we have, and we should have great reason to sigh and lament, in those which are most necessary, most just, and most happy.

'Tis likewise by this way of beholding Death that we ought to endeavour to undeceive our selves of the imaginary grandeur we give to temporal goods, and to raise the Idea we have of eternal ones. And to the end we may be less concerned at one, and more at the other, we must apply often to the one and to the other the rule of eternity, which makes us comprehend the difference.

We must take delight in contemplating this rapid torrent which annihilates all things subject to time: *Aug. in Ps. 98. Momenti transvolantibus cuncta rapiuntur, torrens rerum fluit.* Either we pass by them if they have a little more solidity than we; or they pass by us if

we

we are more durable than they. *Aug. in Pf. 122. Neceſſe eſt tranſeat aut ipſe per res ſuas; aut res ipſius per illum.* But in fine, all is hurried away, and nothing of temporal remains.

Let us ſay then, whiſt we can do it profitably, all things paſs away, that we may not ſay one day, all is gone, *Aug. in Pf. 32. Modo fructuoſe dicamus tranſeunt, ne tunc dicamus in fructuoſe tranſierunt.* Let us ſay it of all that pleaſes and flatters us in the World, to the end we may deſpiſe it. Let us ſay it of all that appears hard and terrible therein, that we may not fear it.

Let all that diſappears, all the alterations we have ſeen, all the Ages we have paſt through, all the parts of our life which continually ſlide away, renew in us without intermiſſion the thought that all is ended, that there is no true good nor evil but in eternity, and that we are ſo near it, that we ought to reckon as nothing the ſmall interval which ſeparates us from it.

CHAP. XI.

The Third manner of considering Death, which is to look upon it as a state wherein we begin to see and understand God.

ALthough what we partake of here in divers considerations, may be united into one single one, in a Soul which quits the Body, and that the same impression of light which makes her see that the World is lost as to her, that her time is finisht, that she enters into Eternity, discovers to her yet an infinite of other objects, which fills her with admiration, and produces in her divers sentiments, according to the disposition she findes her self in; nevertheless it is very good to distinguish in divers considerations this great object which she comprehends all at once, because it is so vast and of such an extent that it cannot be known in this World but by being thus divided.

The greatest and considerablest part of this spectacle, is, without question, that at the very instant that the Soul is separated from the body, she begins to

to know God in a quite different manner than she did in this life.

For 'tis a strange thing how weak and obscure the knowledge we have at present thereof is. God does all in the World: He is every where: All creatures have their being, their lives, and their motion from him. He guides and governs them according as he designs. They cannot go a jot from the order of his Providence. And yet we see nothing at all of that. God hides himself always in this World under the veil of some Creatures which he presents to our senses, and gives no evident testimony of his presence: so being absolutely busied with Creatures, we never have any other than weak Ideas of the invisible power which moves them.

But it will not be so in the other life. From the very moment that the Soul shall be delivered from the prison of the body, she will begin to perceive the intimate and the essential dependance she hath on God, as to being, or acting, touching her happiness or misery. She will know Gods power and her own weakness. She will see that she cannot substract her self from his power, and that she must remain eternally in the

the state whereunto his Divine Justice shall reduce her.

'Twill be then that this saying of *Isaiah* will be accomplished; in respect of us: cap. 2. 11. *Exaltabitur Dominus solus in die illa.* He is humbled at present before our eyes, because we know him not well; but he shall be exalted in that day, because we shall acknowledge the infiniteness of his power, and our littleness and wretchedness.

That day wherein God shall be exalted according to the Prophet, is the day of eternity, which begins at our Death. From that moment all Men shall have a continual prospect of Gods infinite greatness, and of Mankinds wretchedness. They shall not be able to forget God, nor to mistake him; and this double ignorance which the World is at present buried in shall be absolutely banisht in the other.

It is true, that this sentiment will be very different in the chosen and the reprobate. For he will cause eternal joy to the one, and eternal despair to the other. The chosen will place their happiness in seeing the greatness and powerfulness of God; because they will see at the same time his essence, his mercy, and his love, which will overwhelm them with joy; but

but the reprobates seeing only the inflexibility of God's Justice, and his hatred for them, and the infinite Power he has of punishing them, will find a great part of their Torment in this Sight.

They will not only see this inexorable and all-powerful Justice armed to punish them; but they will see it for all Eternity, without being able to avoid it. They will see God, saith *St. Gregory of Nazianse, Orat. 21.* like a Fire, because they would not see him as a Light: They shall see themselves in his hands, as it were in the hands of an Enemy, who will trample them under his Feet, without any hopes of delivering themselves from thence. Thus their Rage and Despair will be turned against God, as Author of their Misery. They will little consider all Creatures, and will be almost always busied about God in this miserable and detestable manner.

Behold the State of Men, both Chosen and Reprobate, for all Eternity. And this State teaches us what we ought to do in Time: For seeing we cannot be happy but by the Sight and Love of God, it being the End whereunto we ought to tend, and that 'twill be our onely Employment and Occupation in all Eternity;
what

what ought we to do in this Life, which is onely a Preparation to Eternity, but exercise our selves to know and love God? *Exercise your selves to possess God,* says St. Austin, in Psal. 83. *desire a long time what you ought always to have: Ad contemplandum Deum exercere: Quod semper habiturus es diu desidera.*

We shall enjoy him in Eternity but as we shall have exercised our selves in the World to enjoy him, that is to say, to know and love him: We shall not possess him but in proportion as we shall have desired him: For, we cannot imagine, that having always had him far from our thoughts and hearts in this Life, he will discover himself to us in the other, in this manner, which will cause the Happiness of the Saints. *No man,* saith St. Austin, in Psal. 148. *is in a condition to enter into this most happy Life, unless he hath exercised himself during this Life here: Nemo potest idoneus fieri futura vite, qui se ad illam modo non exercuerit.*

Nevertheless, what do men in this World, and what do they employ themselves about? What place hath God in their Thoughts, in their Designs, in their Discourses, and in their Conducts? Do not most part of Men spend their Lives
in

in the forgetfulness of God? and do not they even place their Happiness in this Oblivion? The Sight of God is never the Principle of any of their Actions, nor ever troubles the Conduct of their Lives.

They do not act thus in the affairs which regard the time present. If they foresee that they shall be obliged to live some part of their lives with such an one, and that their fortunes or their quiet depends of him, they endeavour to gain him, to manage him, to creep into his favour, and to adapt themselves to his humours. They are afraid to hurt or exasperate him. And yet although they know they shall be eternally in the hands of God, they will not so much as think of him, nor take any pains to obtain his friendship.

Let us have a horror for this unconceivable folly; and that our actions may be far remote from it, let us endeavour to imprint these truths livelily in our minds; let us have only transitory ties with creatures, which are all broken by Death, and after Death let us be eternally separated from them, but let nothing be able to separate us from God; for Death will only make

us feel more sensibly the dependance we have on him; for Man is so made for, and so related to him, that it is necessary that God cause either his happiness by his love, or his misery by his hate; for in the one or the other manner God will be eternally present; and so the sole means not to see him eternally his enemy, is to make it his principal care to render himself a friend during this life.

CHAP. XII.

The Fourth manner of considering Death, as the entrance into the society of Spirits.

ALL that's discovered by the Soul at the very moment of Death, is a very small thing in comparison of God, who manifests himself to her as we have already represented. But as the Soul is not always touched in this life according to the greatness of the objects, but in relation to the impression they make upon the imagination, it will not be amiss to consider yet the other parts of this great spectacle which presents it self to the Soul at her going out of the Body.

That

That which apparently makes the most considerable part after what we have already marked, is that great troop of Spirits, with which she finds her self at once infested, those Devils which she begins to see openly, that prodigious number of damned, and happy Souls whereof God has given her some knowledge in what State soever she be; seeing that the book of Wisdom shews, that the damned know something of the happiness and the glory of Saints, which makes them cry out with rage and despair: Sap. 5. 3. *Hi sunt quos habitus aliquando in derisum & in similitudinem impropertii.* The Soul then discovers in an instant this dreadful number of Creatures, and she perceives a total subversion of the World which she has quitted. She sees that most part of those who have appeared in that with most splendor and pomp, are reduced in this to the last degree of misery; that those Kings and Princes who have made the whole World to quake, are only distinguished from other men in this, that they are often the most miserable of all: There is no more question in the society of the Dead, of riches, of nobility, of quality, of body nor of mind,

nor of those other vain advantages by which Men endeavour to raise themselves here one above another, but that all there is regulated according to the Laws of a Sovereign and invariable Justice which placeth each in the rank of misery or happiness wherein he ought to be, and no one is able to go out of the place or rank which is assigned him.

But the principal difference she observes amongst these two Worlds, is, that that of the living is composed of divers societies, and as it were of divers combinations, whereby Men are united together, either to help and assist one another in their necessities; or to resist their Enemies, or to set upon others. But in the World of Spirits there are no more societies nor combinations; because they have no need nor dependance of one another. All there have an immediate relation to God. 'Tis he who governs all; and each Spirit sees clearly that he is obliged by his order, and that 'tis not in the power of any Creature to substract him from thence.

Thus in what number soever the Spirits may be, they are in an entire separation from one another. The Blessed
love

love one another in truth with a perfect love; and the happiness of each contributes to that of the others, through the joy they present thereby, which makes up the most holy and the most happy of all these societies; but it is not a society of dependance nor of mutual succours. They all draw their whole felicity from the same source. They find there all they desire or wish for. And thus their society neither hinders nor troubles their solitude.

The wicked, on the contrary, are in a solitude which has nothing but what is dismal and frightful. They all hate one another. They do not hope for either help or succour, or consolation from any Creature. They do not see in any either power, or desire to do them any good. Thus the sight of this croud of Spirits is for them only an encrease of desolation, and it does nothing but augment their despair, by giving them a more lively Idea of their weakness.

We cannot doubt but that the prospect of this spectacle, so different from the Ideas a Soul retains of what she hath seen in the World she lately left, may cause in her a great surprise, that

she may conceive an extream disdain for all she hath esteemed most therein, that she may be pierced with grief, to have set her affections on so many vain things, and to have had little esteem for what was truly durable and solid.

But by how much this prospect, this surprise, and these regrets are unprofitable to the Souls of the Dead, because their lot is at once fixed by the decree of God, who assigns them their places; by so much 'twill be necessary for us to see these sentiments in this life, to busie our selves about this spectacle, to mingle our selves in Spirit with this croud of the Dead, to consider there these eternal places, and these constant distinctions, this happy or miserable solitude, to the end we may conceive a profound disdain for all grandeurs, all establishments, and all humane distinctions, and only make account of those secret differences which God puts in this world here amongst Souls by the gifts of his grace; and which will have such great effects in the other.

CHAP. XIII.

The Fifth manner of considering of Death : which is, to conceive that at the hour of Death each Soul discovers the Devils, and their rage towards her and all other men.

ALthough the Devils make part of the Spirits, whereof we have spoken in the foregoing Chapter, nevertheless it is good to make some reflexions upon the sentiments the Soul conceives in perceiving clearly these wicked Spirits at the instant she forsakes this body. We know in general, by faith, that they go about us like roaring Lions, which only seek how to devour us, and employ all sort of Artifices to destroy us; but we know not what these Artifices are. We have only a confus'd Idea of their malice and rage against Men, and even oftentimes we scarcely discern their voices from that of Gods.

All these clouds are dissipated by Death. We shall see in that moment an innumerable multitude of those wicked Spirits spread over the Earth, possessing and disquieting most part of

mankind, endeavouring to surprise those which they do not as yet possess. We shall see in what manner they will deceive them, by presenting them some objects which will withdraw or irritate their passions, in procuring them the success which may entertain them in illusion, keeping them always out of themselves, and removing far from them all that shall make them know the miserable state wherein they are. We shall see them tied fast, haled along, imprisoned, wounded with a thousand wounds, and that these evil Spirits prepare in them the matter of their Condemnation and their Hell.

Although we shall make a difficulty of giving to Souls separated from the body so large a knowledge, yet we cannot deny but each will know at the moment of her separation from the body all the snares the Devil has prepared for her, all the precipices he has forced her down, and all the illusions wherewith he hath amused her. Now if God, notwithstanding all these surprises, hath given her the grace to overcome the Devil in these essential things; if she have avoided his worst snares, she enters into transports of joy, which
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the Prophet describes, when he makes a Soul say in the presence of this frightful number of snares she has avoided: *Blessed be our Lord, who has delivered us from being a prey to be torn in pieces by their teeth. Our Souls have been saved even as a Bird saves her self from the Fowlers net. Ps. 126. v. 6.*

But who can conceive the state of a Soul who comes to acknowledge that the Devil hath prospered in his wicked designs; that she has been as an instrument against her self; that she has seconded his desires, has delivered her self to her executioner, has laboured only to establish his Empire over her self? Who can comprehend her despair, when he comes himself with his whole rage to take possession of his conquest, insulting over her, and placing before her Eyes how he seduced her to make her the companion of his misery?

These are the insults and the Costs the Prophet feared when he said to God: *Let not my Enemies deride me; let them not say in their heart, Our desires are accomplished; let them not say, We have devoured him. Ps. 34. 24.*

'Tis through fear of these so terrible objects that St. Bernard excited himself : De divers. Ser. 26. n. 6. *What, said he, will be thy fear, O my Soul, when being separated by Death from all those objects whose sight hath been so pleasing to thee, and familiarity so sweet, thou shalt enter alone into an unknown region, and that these horrible monsters shall come to thee unawares? Who will assist thee in this so extream necessity? Who will defend thee from these furious beasts ready to devour thee? Who will comfort thee? Who will guide thee?*

All these sentiments come from this prospect of Death we spoke of, which makes us foresee this dismal state of a miserable Soul ready at the moment of Death to discover these horrible creatures, and which is delivered to them by Gods Justice as a prey upon which they satisfy eternally their rage.

The Holy Ghost who hath so often inspired this consideration to the Saints, shews us that we ought to have it continually in our thoughts.

What is there in effect more capable of awakening in us this vigilance which is so much recommended to us by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, than the fear of falling into the hands
of

of this cruel Enemy? What is more proper to hinder us from following our passions, than to imagin that in following them, we follow the desires of the Devil, we labour to establish his Empire, we make him master over us, and we become his instruments and ministers against our selves?

For we ought not to be deceived thereby. It is necessary that either God or the Devil Reign in us. There is no *medium*. Whoever does not endeavour that God Reign in him, endeavours to make the Devil his Master. God Reigns in us when his Spirit Reigns, when we act by his Spirit, when we have God in prospect, that is to say, Justice, Truth, and Charity. The Devil Reigns in us when we are governed by our passions, when we seek only our Glory and our proper satisfaction; in a word, when there is only cupidity that acts in us.

Thus as Men do almost nothing all their lives but follow their own passions, it follows necessarily, they do nothing but labour for the Devil, and to further his designs. Horrible Employment! detestable Ministry! But who nevertheless comprehends all that's done in the World by those who think they are

are the greatest and the happiest therein.

The best means to have a detestation for it, is to consider the end of it, and to place before our Eyes the rage of these Monsters, when they shall appear openly to a Soul, having maliciously deceived her. We ought often to represent them to our selves in this state whilst we live, to hearten us to withstand them, and not to follow their desires and their designs: And as there are no temptations wherein we may not be able to make use of this means, it may be said, that this manner of beholding Death, is a remedy against all temptations.

CHAP. XIV.

The Seventh manner of considering Death, as a day that dissipates our lack of Light, and makes us see things such as they are.

WE say oftentimes of Death, That it will draw a Curtain, and make us see an Infinity of things which we are ignorant of; and it is what we might have already seen, by all those several ways of beholding it which we have proposed.

posed. But what I pretend to explicate here, is, How we may make use of the Meditation of Death to correct the falsity of the Judgments we make of all things in the World, and principally concerning our selves, our Actions, and our proper Conduct.

We are born into the World environ'd with such thick Clouds of Darkness, that we know neither our true good, nor our true evil, nor the rules by which we ought to Judge of them. Our desires, our fears, and our other passions which spring from the bottom of our corruption, makes us conceive a vast number of false Ideas as to what they make use of as Objects; and as we judge of these Ideas, the greatest part of these our Judgements are false. And so our memory becomes a Magazin of all sorts of falsities.

But what is yet worse, is, that these false Judgments do not only infect the mind, they infect the heart, fortify the passions from whence they spring, and produce all the sins Man is guilty of. For there is no sin without some false thought, seeing, as St. *Austin* saith, In Pf. 148. We cannot sin having onely good thoughts; *Non potest fieri ut habeas mala*

mala facta, qui habet cogitationes bonas.

Therefore as our greatest interest is to avoid sin which is the cause of all evils, we ought to labour with all imaginable care, to destroy those false Judgements which are the source thereof, and to fill our minds with those true thoughts from whence good actions do arise.

'Tis true, 'tis from the light of faith we must expect it, seeing, as St. Paul faith, of our selves we are not capable of producing one single good thought. But this dependance does not exclude the application to certain objects which assist us to find out the truth, nor the practice of certain means which drive far away from us what hinders the discerning it.

This is the foundation of an advice which St. John Climace, Degr. 6. attributes to a Holy Father, and of which persons very learned, and far advanced in Holiness do recommend the practice. It is to look upon each day as the last of this life, and to enter, in regard of all affairs to which we are obliged, into the disposition we would desire to be in, if we were to give an account to God within five or six hours.

The

The reason of this advice, is, That nothing is more capable to put out of our mindes the false Ideas evil desires produce, than the thoughts of death, and what ought to follow. Methinks the passions dare not appear before this object, and that it awakens all that reason, light, and force we have. We see more clearly what ought to be done, and we execute it with greater resolution, and more intension, and more free from humane considerations.

But that we may draw more advantage from this practice, it is good not to judge simply of all things as if we were to die presently, but to have access as much as possible we can to the considerations and sentiments we shall have at the very moment of the Souls leaving the body.

It is most certain, that being Judged by God at that moment, He will place before our Eyes all the actions of our lives; that the Soul will know what is Judged of her, and will in this manner form Judgements of all that hath passed through her mind during her abode in the body. That is to say, she will determine of all her Judgements and thoughts, and will condemn all falsities
and

and injustices she shall have committed.

It will not only be the Souls of the Elect who shall know clearly, then, all their Errors; but also the Souls of the Reprobate. For although the Scripture tells them they have erred and gone astray from the way of truth, and that the Sun of Justice has not shined upon them, it shews they shall be convinced of their digressions, and of the false lights whereby they have been guided.

If then they do not condemn the Judgements they have made during their lives through the love of Justice, they will condemn them through the love of themselves. They will be forced to grant they were full of folly. They will call themselves foolish Men: *Nos insensati*. Now they cannot do it, but they must judge that Wisdom would have them do quite contrary to what they have done.

The Judgements which the Souls have of their actions in that moment are not only true, but they are moreover eternal, and what they judge then, they judge it for ever, because there will be no more in them what is called variety in thoughts.

Now.

Now what will be true for all eternity, is so at present. All our care should be never to guide our selves by these transitory judgements, which only appear true when the passions are stirred; but so to judge and act according to these stable, invariable, and eternal considerations, which we shall have after our Death.

Thus what secure object is presented to our selves, or strikes our imaginations, instead of consulting our senses, our passions, and our small interests, we ought, that we may judge truly, consider seriously what we shall judge of it after our Death; what we would have done, when we shall be judged by Jesus Christ. What we think may be approved by this just Judge. Finally, what we our selves shall approve in eternity. Let Cases of conscience decide without trouble in favour of this light! Let false subtleties vanish away! Let vain phantoms disappear.

Happy are those who in this manner make themselves Disciples to Death, who make use of its light to dissipate the darkness of their hearts; and who think at present what they shall consider hereafter: Truly, 'tis to be dead to the World, to live in this manner, seeing

seeing that it is neither to think nor act any more according to the light of life, which is that of this World, but according to the lights of the other life which are those of eternity.

We ought not then, after all the advantages which we have shewn may be drawn from the thoughts of Death, be astonisht, that St. John Climace hath said, *Degr. 6. That as of all foods Bread is most necessary, also of all Spiritual practices the meditation of Death is most useful; it makes the Religious who live in community to undertake the labours and exercises of Penance, and find the greatest pleasure in being humble and disdain'd; and as to those who live in solitary places, far remote from all tumult and trouble of the World, it produceth in them an entire relinquishing of all Earthly cares, continual praying, and an exact vigilancy over their thoughts.*

In a word, it may be said of this holy exercise, that 'tis the source of lights whereby to know what is our duties, an universal remedy against all our passions and vices, a powerful help against temptations, a School of Virtues, and a means to sweeten all the mischiefs of this life.

And

Book I. Of Death. 91

And to end where we have begun,
It is, according to the wise Man,
an efficacious means to avoid all sins.
Now as he who sins not is just in
this World, and will be happy in the
other, it follows, that the meditation
of Death is the way to holiness and
beatitude.

FIRST

FIRST
TREATISE,
OF THE
Four Last Ends of
M A N.

BOOK II.
Of Judgement, and of Hell.

CHAP. I.

*How necessary it is to think of Judgment.
Why the Church proposes commonly to her
Children the Universal Judgment, rather
than the Particular.*

What St. *Austin* saith to his People, in one of his Sermons upon *Psal. 147.* That he ought to speak to them continually of Judgment; shews, that we should always think thereof, being the Pastors ought not to speak to us of it,
but

but that we ought to have it in our Memories.

We are obliged so much more to do it, by how much we shall want means to do it after this Life. For, as this Holy Doctor saith, *Epist. 70. the last day of the World we shall be in the same state wherein we shall find our selves the last day of our Lives: And such as we shall be when we come to die, such we shall be judged in that terrible day.* So it is true, as he yet adds, the day of death is esteemed by each as a day of Universal Judgment, because Death fixeth the State wherein we shall be judged.

From hence it follows, that as every Christian is obliged to be upon his guard, that he may not be surpris'd by the Day of judgement; according as Jesus Christ commands in the Gospel, he ought not to watch with less care of that of his Death. 'Tis what we may conclude of the belief wherein the Church is, that the damnation of the wicked, and, the recompence of the good, are not put off to the Day Judgment, as some of the ancients have believed; but that the Souls who have no more to expiate, enter at the very instant which follows Death into possession
on

on of glory, and those whose sins deserve Hell, begin to suffer torments when they leave the body. For it follows clearly from hence, that as God will not punish the one, nor crown the other, not having been judged, and judged by Jesus Christ, to whom all judgement hath been given, we must believe that Jesus Christ will judge each Soul in particular at the moment she shall be separated from the body.

Seeing therefore that we have so short and uncertain a space in this life to prepare us for eternity, which shall be decided by the decree which Jesus Christ shall pronounce at the day of our Death, and that this decree will be the same with that he will pronounce at the last day, is it not the greatest imprudence and the greatest folly that can be, to stuff the minde with all other things, and never to think of this one?

We need not very much reason to consent to this truth; but there wants something besides reason to practise it. We are oftentimes convinced that we ought to fear, but we do not fear effectively; and that there is but one thing to think of, yet we scarcely ever think

think of it in effect. Our hearts follow not reason, and it continues often cold and without motion even when the mind is most persuaded that it ought to be lively touched.

Doubtless there is nothing but grace that can remedy this coldness, and soften this hardness. But as God bids us to have recourse at the same time to outward means, which contribute thereunto when aided by grace, it is good to approach as near as we can these objects with our imagination, and to force it to apply it self often thereunto, instead of banishing them when they present themselves, as most People do.

This is the reason the Church hath to make us call to mind the last Judgment in divers Gospels. She begins by this means the preparation to the coming of Jesus Christ, whereinto she pretends to make the Christians enter in the time of *Advent*. This is one of the first objects she shews to her Children to dispose them to the Penance of *Lent*. 'Tis whereby she finisheth the Ecclesiastical year, the Gospel of the *Sunday* which preceeds *Advent* being yet of Judgment; there-
by

by to shew us that we ought to begin and end all our works and all our life in the sight of Gods judgement, and that as our Penance ought to be continual, this object ought to be always before our Eyes.

But as the use of this meditation consists chiefly in exciting in our hearts the sentiments of fear which produce true security, as St. *Austin* saith: *Aug. in Ps. 146. Terror illi securitatem parit; terribile enim precavimus, prevenientes securis erimus.* The Church judging that these circumstances of the general Judgement are more capable to terrifie us, than those of a particular judgement, doth propose it ordinarily to us; and it is by following her Spirit that the holy Fathers, and above all the primitive Christians, appear so busied therein.

'Tis this that made St. *Gregory of Nazianze* say, *Orat. 9. p. 174.* That the fear of future judgement, did not permit him to breathe, *lux ex adardens.*

- And St. *Ephraim*, That he could not think of the last judgement without feeling a trembling in all his members, and an universal decay.

Other

Other Saints have had the same thoughts and sentiments: And the primitive Christians had them so lively that they took Wars, Famine, and other Calamities which happened in their days, for those frightful signs which ought to be the forerunners of an universal Judgment.

And indeed, what is more capable to make impression upon our minds than meditating of Jesus Christs descending from Heaven; accompanied with all his Angels, to declare to all men united together in the midst of the Clouds, the judgment which shall decide their state for all eternity.

Who would not be affrighted, in considering the subversion of all Nature which shall accompany this judgment, whereof Saint Peter says, *That in the noise of a terrible tempest, the Heavens shall pass, the Elements inflamed shall be dissolved, the Earth with all it contains shall be consumed by Fire?*

If the sight of one Angel reduced Daniel unto such a weakness, which made him say: *In visione tua dissoluta sunt compages mea;* What will be the state of a miserable reprobate, in whom fear, horror, and the other passions

cannot be lessened by the decay of the body, and in whose Soul there shall be no force to uphold the impressions of this dismal spectacle, but to feel them more lively?

The Fathers did not make their Spirituality to consist in dispersing these objects from their minds, to entertain themselves with sweet and comfortable meditations. They thought they were of the number of those who had need to be affrighted thereat, and they have made very great use of them for themselves, and for others.

I am afraid, says St. Gregory of Nazianze, (*Orat. 15.*) of the saying of the Prophet, who cried out: *What shall we do at the day wherein God shall enter into a reckoning and into judgment with us: When he shall convince us of all our crimes, present to our faces all our sins as cruel accusers, and place the iniquities whereof we shall have rendered our selves guilty, in opposition to the good deeds we should have received of him? When he shall demand an account of us of the Majesty of his Image he had imprinted in us, and which we have quite spoil'd and disfigured by our disorders? when he shall make us condemn our selves, and shall reduce us*
not

not to be able even to say, that we suffer unjustly? Who shall be our Advocate before this Judge? By what pretences, by what false excuses, by what artificial colours, by what invensions, how subtil soever, shall we be able to disguise the truth before this Sovereign Tribunal, and avoid the invariable rectitude and justness of this judgment? He shall put our actions, words, and thoughts, into the Scale. There shall be weighed the good and the bad, to the end, that having seen those which outweigh, there may be proposed a Decree after which there shall be no Appeal, no superior Judge to whom we can have recourse unto, no means to destroy these wicked actions by contrary ones, no Oyle to be brought of the wise Virgins, or of those who sell it to light the extinct Lamps with: All will be terminated at this last only and dreadful Decree, more just yet than terrible, and so much more terrible as it's more just. It shall be when the Thrones shall be placed; that he whom the Scripture calls the Ancient of days, will be seated in the first: That the Books shall be opened: That we shall see round a flood of fire; that the light shall be on one side, and darkness on the other, ready to receive those who shall be precipitated thereinto.

It would be too long to relate the descriptions which the other Fathers, but but above all St. Ephram makes, of this judgment, and it may suffice to propose what St. Bernard says thereof. (*Ser. 16. in Cant.*) who comprehends in few words what the others do. *I fear, saith he, the sight of this Judge, able to make the Angels themselves to tremble. I fear the wrath of this mighty God. I fear the marks of his fury. I fear that destruction of the World turned topsy-turvy; that conflagration of the Elements; that dreadful tempest, that voice of the Arch-Angel; that hard and terrible word. I tremble in thinking of the teeth of that infernal fiend; of the Gulf of Hell; of those devouring Lyons, ready to devour their prey. I am struck with horror with the Image of that worme which gnaws the Wicked, with the fire which burns them, with this Smoke and sulfurous vapour; with those impetuous winds and outward darkneses. Who will pour upon my head a source of water, and who will give to my eyes a fountain of tears, to prevent by my cries those eternal ones, and those horrible gnashing of teeth, those cruel bonds, and the weight of those chains which shall overwhelm, inclose, and burn the damned, without consuming them?*

But

But although these circumstances be so terrible, they are yet much less in effect than the impression which God makes upon the Souls by the knowledge he will give them of their sins, of his justice, and of all other things upon which the eternal decree, which he shall pronounce upon each of them, shall be grounded. And as this impression happens also in the particular judgment, by which God makes the Soul know the place which belongs to her, and by what actions she deserves it; it is to meditate at the same time each judgment, to endeavour to comprehend as much as we can in this life, what this light of God discovers to the Soul when he judges her; 'tis what we shall particularly insist upon in the following Chapters.

CHAP. II.

Of the consideration we shall have of the multitude of our sins. Concerning the two judgments.

ALL Christians believe that God will make the Soul know all her sins,

sins, whether in the particular judgment he will make of them, when she leaves the body, or, in the public judgment he shall pronounce at the end of the world, in the sight of all men. All flesh rings at this threat, that there is nothing so secret in our actions, in our thoughts, in the motions of our hearts, which may not be discovered; he will place all that before our eyes, and he will make thereof a very rigorous examination. Nevertheless, hardly any one will be concerned at this so terrible a truth. It seems that 'twill not concern us, and that 'tis not we who ought so to be examined so severely.

It happens to us in regard of this truth, what happens to all others. We are at first a little affrightened, but at length we become accustomed to them, and learn to hear them without any concern. It is not either that these truths change, or that our minds are fortified by custom. What is terrible, will be always so, if we conceive it always in the same manner. But the effect of custom is to change our Ideas, to render them more superficial and confused, and to cause the mind to apply it
self

self thereto more lightly. To remedy this evil effect, it is requisite we conceive sometimes these truths in themselves by some Images which may render them more sensible, and perchance that which we shall make use of here will contribute something thereunto.

Let us then imagin a vast Room, but yet obscure, and that a man labour his whole life to fill it with Vipers and Serpents: Let him bring daily a great quantity, and employ divers persons to assist him to make a heap of them; but that as soon as these Serpents are in the Chamber, they are benumbed, being heaped one upon another, in such a manner that they permit this man to lie upon them, without stinging or doing him any harm. Let this state continue for a considerable time, that this man is accustomed to it, and that he apprehends nothing of harm from this heap of Serpents. But when he shall think the least thereof, the Windows of this Chamber chance to fly open suddenly, and admit in a great Light, all these Serpents waken immediately, and cast themselves upon this miserable Man, they pull him in pieces by their bitings, and

not one of them but makes him feel his Venom. How terrible soever this Image is, 'tis only a weak draught of what men do commonly, and what happens to them at the day of their deaths.

Man lives here plunged in so thick clouds, that he has much a-doe to perceive the most gross faults, and yet he forgets them frequently as he commits them. His conscience is this obscure place where he heaps them, and he does almost nothing but augment and encrease their number, because he does all for himself and nothing for God Almighty.

Often likewise he makes use of other mens assistance, as if he had a design to gather a greater number together. For there are many, who besides their own sins, charge themselves with other mens, and who have under them an infinite of persons who sin, if I may say so, on their account; because the sins they commit are imputed to them by Gods justice.

All these sins are as it were senceless during this life, because they do not perceive them. They suffer them without trouble. They take their rest. They apprehend

apprehend nothing. They take no care to get rid of them. And on the contrary only encrease every day the number of them.

Death then finds most men in this wicked-exercise. 'Tis this which brings in this light which awakens all these sins. The light God gives to the Soul at the *instant* of death withdraws her from this insensibility, and being thus awakened comes of a sudden to discover all these monsters which death inclosed in her bosom. She does not only discover them, she feels the mortal stings. She is cruelly torn, there not being any of her sins which does not make her feel it.

Who can comprehend the multitude of them? All those man has known in committing them, and which afterwards he would willingly have forgotten; all those he has dissembled; all the vain thoughts he has insisted upon; all the evil actions he has consented to; all his omissions, the neglect of his duty, the scandals he has given, and the evil consequences of them, all these will be set before his eyes distinctly, how unwilling soever he may be to see them. That is to say, he

will see for the most part that he has done nothing all his life but sucked up poison, been oppressed with new troubles; and prepared new punishments for himself.

There is no sinner who ought not to tremble at the fear of this horrible spectacle, which Gods justice will discover to him at the hour of his death. But there are none who ought to be more afraid than those who are in eminent places, who are to give an account to God, not only for their own sins, but also for the sins others commit who are under their charge.

What a throng of Crimes present themselves at the hour of death to the Soul of a Bishop who came wrongfully to his Charge, and hath continued all his life to abuse his Ministry? And who can conceive in what excess of despair he enters; when he sees himself charged at the Judgment Seat, with as many Sacriledges as he hath offered Sacrifices, as he hath administered the Sacraments, and performed Episcopal Functions; and that he acknowledges moreover, that Gods justice imputes to him all the Sacriledges of the Priests he hath ordained rashly, all the precipi-

precipitated Absolutions they have given, all the Scandals they have caused; and lastly, that the Judge him guilty of as many Spiritual homicides, not only as there are Souls, to whom he hath brought death by the Scandal of his life, or by that of his Ministers he hath chosen, or suffered by negligence, but also of as many as these evil examples have been able to cast away, although the grace of God hath upheld them: Because as many as have relied on him, he has destroyed, as St. *Austin* saith: *Aug. de Past. c. 4. Non sibi ergo blandiatur quia ille non est mortuus, & ille vivit & iste homicida est:* So that a wicked Bishop shall be treated by God as a Murderer of all the Souls of his Diocess.

But it is not necessary to have recourse to these Examples, to be frightened at this multitude of sins which the Soul discovers in appearing before God. Those who have lead the most retired lives, and the freest from the commerce and corruption of this World, have but too much reason to fear it, and it ought to suffice them to conceive the just fear we ought to have thereof, to know that
they

they are to render an account of the use they have made of all the favours they have received, of all the truths they have heard, of all the Sacraments of which they have participated, of all the good examples they have seen, of all the good works they ought to have done, and lastly, how they have made use of their time, of their Souls and Bodies.

“What care soever, saith St. Gregory the Great, *Mor. in Job. l. 24 c. 7.* most People have had to avoid all the sins they could call to mind, when they consider yet that they are to appear before a severe Judge, they are seized with fear, chiefly because of some sins they may be guilty of without knowing them. For who can comprehend the number of faults they commit by the restless and unconstant thoughts to which they are subject? The actions of sin may be avoided: But there is nothing harder than to guard the heart from these wicked, dishonest, and unlawful thoughts. And yet it is written: Miserable are you, who entertain your selves about unprofitable thoughts. Behold the subject of most just mens fear. Now how much

much greater reason have those who lead a loose life to be in continual fear and trembling?

CHAP. III.

How terrible both judgments are by the annihilation which will be made of all human works which flatter men.

IF Gods judgment be so terrible, by what appears to us therein, it is not less by what disappears, and which is destroyed and annihilated. I speak not of grandeur, titles, pomps, praises, and all other things men see themselves absolutely robbed of in the other World. I speak of all apparent good works which make up a considerable part of their support, confidence and rest.

For every one desiring to be at peace with himself, is naturally swayed to fancy a kind of conscience, and to gather together what ever is best in this life to be able to bear a favourable judgment of it. But as we do not make this Examen with a design of pleasing God, but to procure our selves human peace, we do not observe therein any
great

great exactness. We judge of our selves for the most part by the outward man, by the body of our actions; by the esteem and approbation of other men, by the example of some honest men who have done the same things as we have; by putting away of some certain wicked considerations which have not been observed in us; by crimes which we abhor'd, and which we have not committed; by comparing our selves with others whom we thought more wicked than our selves, and who act what we would not; and above all we raise a certain Edifice of this life to our selves, wherewith we are content, and which we think may subsist with Gods judgment, and even deserve some recompence. For in effect, divers good works enter by this means; Prayers, receiving the Sacraments, outward works of piety. Those who are in the Ministry of the Church may add thereto preaching, directions, and instructions, which make them hope for the Reward God hath promised to those who have done and taught these things.

But who will be able to express how many of these Edifices will be ruined, when they come to pass through the fire
of

of this judgment, which shall consume, as St. Paul saith, all the Straw, Hay, and all the Wood which shall be found there; what shall be the astonishment of a deceived Soul, who having placed her hopes therein shall acknowledge clearly, by the light of God, the vanity and miserableness of all her works?

'Twill be there, saith St. Bernard, De Divers. ser. 26. n. 6. that what we take for Gold shall be changed into Dross, that the impurity of all our works will be discovered, and that the time of truth being come, after that given us by God is past, shall judge our justness. 'Twill be there that all our upright dealings which flatter us, shall appear horrible to us; that all we look upon as small, all we neglect by a wicked dissimulation shall be consumed by those revenges flames.

It sufficeth to make us conceive what we have to fear, to say, that there will be nothing but what we have done by the motive of the Spirit of God, which will subsist at the judgment, and that Gods Spirit acts only in us what hath God for its end, and is ruled by the light of his wisdom; that thus all that we do only for our satisfaction; for our honour; for our quiet; for our

own

own interest; and by some other motive than that of the true love of God, is no more than Hay, Wood, or Straw.

That which is more terrible, is, that those works whose source is corrupted, are not destroyed but in the false appearance of good works, and subsist as sins. All these false Virtues being unmasked will appear in their natural deformity. So, instead of being the prop and support of the Soul in this judgment, they will only serve to depress and overthrow her.

How many who think they are rich in good works, are reduced then to a shameful poverty, seeing all they have put their confidence in, had only for Principle, interest, vanity, and the desire of mens good opinions; and what they thought an inspiration of God, nothing but a suggestion of the Devil, who only endeavoured to dazle them by a false splendour of their actions, that he might hinder them from thinking seriously of themselves.

Happy are those who in this fire, which shall destroy all human endeavours, shall find they have the solid foundation of Jesus Christs love, which cannot be destroyed; and some little
of

of this Gold and those precious Stones which shall subsist, and become more famous.

But miserable are those who shall have neither this Gold, nor those precious Stones, nor this solid Foundation, and whose whole Labour shall be consumed by the devouring fire of Gods justice.

It is certain that this so frightful misery will happen to a great many, who shall have walked in those paths which the wise man speaks of, which appearing streight to those who walk in them, do nevertheless lead them to death: and that there are many who shall find in the examination that will be made of their actions, that all their life hath been a continual illusion, and that those pains which got them mens esteem, were only grounded upon the love of themselves. And it is moreover certain, that no man can know with any certainty whether he be not of the number of the wicked; whether his works be not such as have only the appearance of Piety; without truth or essence; whether he have not some poison hid in him which spoils and poisoneth them at the root; and whether he shall not see

see the ruine and firing of them at the day of judgment.

We know certainly that we are full of sin, but we know but imperfectly, that we have any good works. We know that we have some fewel for the fire of the other life; and we cannot certainly know that we have any thing that can subsist there.

'Tis likewise this consideration which hath held the Saints in a continual trembling, and given them a holy diffidence of all their Labours. "I will have a care, saith *St. Bernard*, lest "I take Tares for good Grain, and "Straw for Wheat. I will examin all "my ways; that he who shall come to "examin, not the *Babylon* of the "world which is already judged, but "*Jerusalem* it self, and who will judge "it by the light of his Lamps, may "find nothing in me which hath not "been examined. Who will do me "the favour, that I may detect and "penetrate now in such sort the "great number of debts I am accountable for, that I may have no reason to doubt or fear the piercing "Eyes of Almighty God? But alas! "he sees me, but I see him not; nor do

"I see my self. That Eye which sees
 "all does not discover it self. 'Tis
 "then this secret Judge concerning
 "what is most secret in our Souls that
 "I ought to fear. 'Tis this Judge who
 "says, he will judge upright dealings,
 "and who sees at this present that in-
 finite number of debts, which I know not.

How much more cause have we, saith
 St. Bernard, to be distrustful of our
 works, and to apprehend the judgment
 God shall give of them? Yet instead of
 being always dejected and cast down
 under the Majesty of our Judge, we
 live in a stupid repose, and act as if
 we were absolutely certain of our Sal-
 vation.

CHAP. IV.

*How terrible the judgment of God is by
 the sight we shall have of his rigour
 and justice.*

IF the form of our Eyes, which now
 makes us see bodies in a certain
 greatness, happened suddenly to be
 changed in that of a Microscope, so as
 to represent worms to us like unto Ele-
 phants,

phants, and Elephants like Mountains, without doubt this new spectacle would cause in us an extream surprise, and yet more if we had the liberty to take this new manner of seeing these objects for the true, and of beholding these such as we saw them before, as an illusion of our senses.

The World would be quite new to us. We should acknowledge nothing therein, and we should have much ado to comprehend how this could come to pass, that we should lessen in this manner such great Bodies, as to form such little Images.

Now what never happens in respect of the Eyes of the Body, does in respect of those of the Soul, in a more frightful manner. For there would always be some proportion betwixt these two different ways of seeing the same Bodies. But there is none at all betwixt the Idea we have of sins during this life, and the other.

We must then suppose that the light which God gives to a Soul when he sets it before her Eyes, does not only discover to her an innumerable multitude of sins she never thought of, but it discovers to her the least of these
sins

sin in so monstrous a greatness, that it exceeds all our imaginations.

The cause of this small Idea we have of them in this life, is the little knowledge which we have here of Gods justice; and the cause on the contrary of this prodigious greatness we shall see them in the other life, is the clear sight God gives us of this justice. We shall see even to what point sin is hated by God, the terrible deformity it causeth in the Soul, the horrible disorder it includes, the opposition it hath to holiness and the justice of God. We shall all be convinced of the rigour and the inflexibility of this justice. And this prospect will be so dreadful to the wicked, that 'twill make them wish for Hell to hide themselves in. They shall be reduced there according to the thoughts of a holy Soul as to a place which is most agreeable to them, and where they shall be the least penetrated by the burning rays of this light which shall chase them from all other places, and which will only permit them that Abyss.

Who can then deplore enough the extream blindness of men; who receive in their hearts these monsters, not only without trouble, but even with joy:
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who open all the doors to them, who likewise often commit vanity?

To tell a man that he loses his fortune, or that he ruins his health by some action, is to oblige him. But to tell him he loses his Soul, his eternity, his God, and his all, is to offend him mortally. We employ all our power to hinder these discourses, and we make our grandure to consist in being more private than others, and to damn our selves with less contradiction. You see here what the World aspires to, and whereof it endeavours to possess it self by all sorts of ways.

But to conceive yet more lively how the sight of Gods justice shall be for the reprobates so great a torment, that to substract themselves from his sight, they will cast themselves into Hell, it must be considered that they will see nothing in nor out of God, which may not help to convince them of the enormity of their crimes, and which it does not arm in some sort against them, by the just reproaches it draws from thence.

It will arm the power of God against them, by letting them see that the more force God hath to punish sinners, the more insolency they have to refuse to obey

obey him. For who is able to express, saith St Austin, the greatness of a crime a creature commits when she does not obey so great a power, and is not stopped by the fear of so terrible punishments wherewith God threatens her? *Quis enim satis explicet verbis quantum sit mali non obedire tanto potestatis imperis, & tanto terrenti supplicio?*

This sight of Gods justice will do the same by his knowledge, his eternity, his immensity, his holiness, his title of Creator, Conservator of men, and Sovereign Good, and Last End. But above all, it will make use of his bounty and mercy to confound them.

For the more they shall have felt the effects thereof, the more they will judge themselves guilty in the abuse they have made thereof. Thus all the effects of Gods bounty will rise in judgment against them. They are so many witnesses which Gods justice prepares against the wicked, according to those words of Job: *Instaurat adversum me testes suos*. And as all these witnesses will convince them of the greatness of their crimes, there shall be a terrible increase of their misery and punishment.

'Tis in this manner that this threat
of

of the Scripture will be accomplished, all the whole World will oppugne the foolish: Sap. c. 5. v. 21. *Est pugnabit orbis terrarum contra insensatos.*

For Creatures having been given to men, only to incline them to glorifie, love, and to fear God, they become culpable and guilty of injustice in making use of them for any other end: So that all these Creatures being marks and proofs of their crimes, they will serve as instruments of Gods justice to punish them.

The Scripture exempts none, saying, *That the whole World will oppugne them,* because they will be convinced to have abused all creatures, not making use of them to glorifie God. They will see they have not only abused Heaven, the Earth, and all the Elements; but that generally they have made bad use of all that is sweet and comfortable in the World, and of all that is hard and bitter; they have abused the good turns and the chastisements of God; his menaces and his promises; their Friends and Enemies; good and bad Examples; the Angels and the Devils; Paradise and Hell; and finally, they have abused their Souls and Bodies, their
lives

lives and beings. For there is nothing in all these that they might not have made use of to excite them to praise, admire, to fear and obey God.

If the good turns themselves, shall cover the reprobates with confusion; what will it be with those they have received of Jesus Christ in quality of Redeemer, and what use will the justice of God make against them concerning his whole Life, Actions, Sufferances, his Blood, his Mysteries, and all his Sacraments and Favours which have been offered and given them, and which their sole malice hath hindered them from participating of?

This is the reason why St. *Austin* thinks it is probable, that Jesus Christ will conserve in his judgment the marks of his wounds, and shew them to the wicked, Aug. de. Symb. 2. Cath. lib. 2. c. 8. and Serm. 179. de. Temp. as it is mentioned in the Scripture: *They have seen him whom they pierced. Viderunt in quem transfixerunt. Behold, will he say, the wounds you have given me: See here the side you have pierced. 'Tis for you, and by you it hath been opened, and yet you would not enter. Videtis vulnera que inflexistis. Agnoscitis latus quod pu-*

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pugistis

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pugistis quoniam & per vos, & propter vos apertum est, nec tamen intrare voluistis.

'Twill not be only the Jews, but all the wicked, who shall then see that they have put Jesus Christ to death, that they are guilty of the inutility of his death for them. That death and those wounds which have caused other mens happiness, shall be for ever the object of their despair. Jesus Christ will upbraid them with them, in making them know the enormity of the Crime by which they have slighted his favours. This is that terrible wrath of the Lamb spoken of in the Apocalypse, which will cause Princes and Potentates of this World to say: Apoc. 66. 16. *Mountains fall upon us, and hide us from the sight of him who sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*

This wrath of the Lamb will be to shew to them, and expose to their Eyes all his Mercies, to make them know by that the excesse of ingratitude with which they have despised them, and what this disdain deserves according to the immoveable and inflexible rules of his Justice.

O incomprehensible spectacle of horror ! that Jesus Christ himself can be
the

the weight which casts down the wicked, his Mercy the measure of their Crimes and Punishments, and that this so sweet and comfortable an object can become for them the height of their misery and confusion !

There will then be no need to dispute, whether they are faulty for not having had the same help as the Elect, they shall go out from before the Judge condemned by themselves, and they shall not have, saith St. *Gregory of Nazianzen*, *Orat. 15. p. 229.* the satisfaction of saying, they suffer something unjustly. They will all be convinced that they are unjust, and that God is just ; that their malice is the cause of their ruine, and that God hath no share therein ; that they can complain of none but themselves, and that 'twas their own faults they did not participate of the graces of Jesus Christ. And although, as St. *Austin* saith, his coming hath been as happy for the Elect, as it hath been dreadful to the Wicked ; they will see nevertheless clearly, that 'tis through their fault, and a voluntary corruption of the heart ; that they are able to impute nothing of it to Jesus Christ ; but that he, on the

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contrary hath right to impute to them
the inutility of his Sufferings and
Death.

So which way soever the Wicked cast
their eyes, they will see nothing but
the cruel reproaches of their injustice,
and they will meet every where Gods
justice as it were an enemy pursuing
them.

If the fence we have in this life of a
single reproach given us by some con-
siderable person, be sometimes so live-
ly and piercing, that it carry the Soul
even to despair; what shall be the vio-
lence of that which the Wicked shall re-
ceive of God, and all Creatures join-
ed to God? *

Shall we wonder after that, That
those to whom God hath been pleased
to shew, in this life, some small part of
this spectacle, may be inclined to some
extraordinary resolutions, even to lead
the remainder of their lives inclosed
within four walls, that they may have
no other object in their minds but this,
as *St. John Climachus* reports of a soli-
tary person of his acquaintance: And
shall we not rather wonder that men
are so insensible, that they are yet in a
condition to busie themselves in the
World

World about so many trifling things?

In truth there is something so wonderful in mens stupidity, and in the bewitchings which link them to the World, that human reason cannot comprehend it. For if we knew not by experience the way how they live, and that consulting reason simply, we would conjecture in what manner People govern themselves, who believe with an infallible certainty that in a short time they are to undergo this terrible judgment, that they shall appear before God to give an account of all their actions, and shall see all we have lately represented; we should never imagine that the greatest part of those who believe all this should almost never think of it at all; that it were the least of their fears, and had no care to prepare themselves for this judgment. There is nothing but the sensible experience we have of it, from others, and from ourselves, which can render this dreadful insensibility believeable by us; and nothing doubtless can make us know this obscurity of the mind, and corruption of mans heart better.

CHAP. V.

*That it is necessary to apply the mind
to consider the judgment of God.*

PERchance if we were moved too violently with the fear of Gods judgments, we might be advised not to insist too long upon so terrible an Object: But there are very few who have need of this precaution. The common People are tempted only with forgetfulness and insensibility in regard of this judgment. Thus nothing is to be feared, but that we may not apply our selves thereunto with diligence.

If we had a care to do it as we ought, we should find by experience that there is no object more capable to humble the Soul to Gods Majesty, to make her re-enter into her wretchedness; to take from her the esteem of Worldly things; and that there are many temptations whereof this thought is the most natural remedy.

For example, there are few things which make more impression upon our minds, than the judgments men have of us whether in good or evil. It is
strange

strange what a relation these judgments have with our Actions. Their suspicions, their rash judgments, their disdain trouble us, exasperate us, and disturb us. Their praises, their approbation, their constancy, their affection gain us, uphold us, raise us, and bring us joy. We rely thereon, we trust thereunto, and by this means we think we are stronger.

All these oblique Considerations whereby the Soul is swayed towards mens judgments, always divert her from God, make her lose the merit of her Actions, and reduce her unawares to a shameful poverty, even when she thinks her self rich in good works.

Those therefore who weigh well their salvation, ought to be extreemly careful of these secret corruptions, and the best way to do it, is to consider often of the small account we shall make of all mens judgments, when we shall appear before God.

'Tis by this means that St. *Austin* opposed the desire of mens praises. *That man*, said he to God, *who desires to be praised by men when you blame him, shall not be defended by them, when you shall judge him, nor be secure from your*

wrath, when you shall condemn him. Qui laudari vult ab hominibus vituperante te, non defendetur ab hominibus judicante te, nec eripietur damnante te.

'Tis true, as this Holy Doctor saith, that having to do with a just Judge, who will condemn us upon the Testimony of our conscience, we need fear nothing but our cause. *Inter judicem justum, & conscientiam tuam, noli timere nisi causam tuam.* And it is also true, that we have nothing to hope in but our cause, and that all men together will signifie nothing to us. Their disallowing will not hurt us, neither will their approbation do us any good. All that will come to nothing before our Eyes. We shall see that we have no need of any thing but God, that our dependance is only on him, and that there is nothing but his judgment which can make us either happy or miserable. This is the State we shall then be in, and that wherein we ought to endeavour to establish our selves in this life, by the consideration of this dreadful judgment.

What is there that can help us more to disperse the clouds of self love, and to discern, for example, whether
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the engagements whereunto we feel our selves inclined, and the designs to which we have a propensity are truly useful for our Salvation, than to represent our selves before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ; and to examina whether it be more advantageous for us to appear there in the State we propose, than in another where it is free for us to place our selves, or to continue. For it is indubitable, that what shall be the best then, is so at present, and that what shall be for us at that time a cause of repenting, ought to be regarded in this life it self as a misery. How many Priests, Bishops, Magistrates, and great Persons of the World, would not be placed in eminent places where to their ambition hath carried them, if they had performed this Examen exactly.

The Author of the imperfect Comment upon St. *Matthew*, who hath gone for a long time under the name of St. *Chrysostom*, holds that those who labour under hand for Bishopricks do believe nothing of the judgment of God, that is to say, that he believed that the faith of the judgment cannot subsist with the ambitious searching after Ecclesiastical Dignities.

And it is by the same consideration that St. Bernard saith generally, that the knowledge of the last Judgment, Ber. Ser. 3. in Vigil. Nativ. is not of all, nor of many, but of few. *Non omnium ista est scientia, sed nec multorum paucorum est.* Do you think, adds he, those who rejoyce at their crimes, and place their pleasure in their disorders, know or have in their minds that Jesus Christ will come? When they shall say, beware of believing them; because that man who saith he knows God, and keeps not his Commandments, is a lyar.

Lastly, Jesus Christ teacheth us in the Evangelists, that there is no motive more pressing to stir up vigilance in us, and to excite us to Prayer, and to move us to forsake Worldly things, than the thought of his judgment. For 'tis that which he proposeth to us to incline us to these essential duties of piety: Luca 21. v. 34. Watch, saith he, and have a care that your hearts be not made heavy with excess of Wine and good Chear, and with the cares of this life, for fear that this day surprise you suddenly. For this day will be like a snare, whereinto all those will fall who dwell upon the face of the Earth, when they shall think

think the least of it. Therefore watch and pray at all times, that you may be able to avoid all these misfortunes.

Seeing then that we must watch and pray continually, to avoid being surprised at this day; we must therefore have it always in our minds. Thus the thought of judgment is the source of vigilance and prayer. And as vigilance and prayer are the source of all favours we receive from God, we may say that this thought is in us the first principle of all our good.

The meditation of judgment ought not only to cause us to watch, but also to act. For it is now the time wherein we may do something to render it favourable. 'Tis the conclusion which St. *Austin* teacheth his People, in one of his Sermons. *This Judge who is Justice it self, saith he, is not to be gained by favour. He will not be touched with pity. He will not be corrupted with presents. He will not be mollified by excuses. Let the Soul then do for her self all she can, whilst there is yet Mercy. For then she will have no more to do or act. Because this will be the time of justice. Let her do penance here, that the Judge may change his Decree. Let her give Alms here, to receive Salvation hereafter. Let her do*
acts

acts of mercy here, that she may deserve pardon in the time to come. Hic agat anima pœnitentiam, ut illic possit mutare sententiam. Hic det panem ut accipiat postmodum salutem. Hic faciat misericordiam ut ibi inveniat indulgentiam.

CHAP. VI.

Of Hell. What is related of Hell in Scripture.

IT has not been possible for us to speak of Death and Judgment without speaking often of Hell, because what renders Death and Judgment terrible, is that Hell always comes after them, in regard of the Wicked.

Nevertheless it will not be amiss to reduce all these several Treatises into one Draught, and to observe directly this hideous conclusion of all the Wicked, without mingling other Ideas which may dissuade us from it.

My design here is not to draw a Picture of it according to fancy, nor to gather together without choice all the evils which the imagination may conceive, to compose this state of Sovereign misery, which is called Hell.

I will give no other Idea of it than what the Scripture does. All that I pretend to do, is to unfold it, and to endeavour to make it be conceived such as it is.

Let us see then what the Scripture speaks of it in the several places where-in it threatens the Wicked.

Saint *John* beginning to Preach of penance, to prepare men to receive the publication of this new Kingdom, which had not yet been published clearly to the Jews, discovers to them at the same time, what is the punishment which attends those who shall not take pains to appease God by worthy fruits of penance.

He hath, said he, Math. 3. 12. speaking of Jesus Christ, the Fan in his Hand: He will cleanse perfectly his Flour, he will heap up his Corn in the Granary, but he will burn the Straw in a Fire which shall never be put out.

Jesus Christ made the same threat in *ch. 13. of the same Gospel.* And this Eternal Fire is also denoted, *Math 25. 41.* in that terrible Decree which he will pronounce at the last day, in these words: *Go ye accursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

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Angels. After which it is said, that these shall go into everlasting punishment, and the just into life everlasting.

Saint *John* in the Apocalypse calls Hell, a pond of Fire and Brimstone. *ch. 20. 10.*

These words give yet only an Idea of some horrible pains which the Wicked shall feel in their bodies; but there are others which denote the interior pains wherewith at the same time they shall be torn in pieces in their minds. *St. Thomas*, after the other Fathers, believes that they are expressed by that Worm which never dies, wherewith Christ threatens the Wicked, in these words: *Mark 9. 46. It were better for you, that having but one Eye you might enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, than to have two and be cast headlong into Hell, where the Worm that gnaws them never dies, and where the Fire never goes out.*

It is true that *St. Austin* saith, *De Civ. Dei. l. 21. c. 11.* That it is not without appearance, that it must be understood by these words, of true Worms and Serpents which shall live in the Fire like the Damned, and that so it is not a meditation altogether groundless, to imagin that in this pond of Sulphur

phur, there will be Serpents which will cause the Wicked to suffer in all the parts of their bodies, griefs and pains proportioned to their Crimes.

But besides that, this Father seems to approve more than we understand by this Worm, the remorse of conscience; if these inward pains are not clearly marked by this word, they are at least very neatly expressed by those which the Book of Wisdom speaks to the Wicked. Sap. 5. *The Wicked, at this sight of Glory and happiness of the just, shall be seised with trouble, and horrible fear, they shall be surprised and amazed, seeing the just at once saved in spite of their endeavours.*

They shall say within themselves, being touched with regret, and sighing from the bottom of their hearts. These are those whom heretofore we have had in derision, and whom we gave for example as persons worthy of all sorts of reproach.

Fools as we were, their lives seemed to us a folly, and their deaths shameful, and yet behold them raised to the Degree of the Children of God, and their shares are with the Saints.

We therefore have erred from the way of truth, the light of justice hath not shined.

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ed unto us, and the Sun of understanding hath not risen upon us.

We have tired our selves in the ways of iniquity and perdition. We have walked in crooked ways, but the way of our Lord we have not known.

If those are not their words, at least they are the sentiments of their hearts; And by this means we learn that there will be not only Corporal punishments in Hell, but Spiritual ones also; that the Wicked will be in trouble and fear; that they will be tormented by envy and jealousy against the Saints, they will condemn their former wandering, and will be seized with a bitter grief to see themselves deprived of the Glory and Felicity of the just.

We may add to this, that 'tis yet certain they shall be subject to the Devils, they being called, *the Kings of all misbelievers*, and the Apostle declares that whosoever is conquered by another becomes his Slave. I will suppose no other principles than these to shew the inconceivable greatness of the torments of Hell. I pretend only to explicate them by some considerations.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

That the Souls shall have in the other life a quite contrary understanding than they have in this.

TO shew the extent of a Souls understanding in the other life, I need only one single proof; 'tis that which furnisheth the general judgment, and that Book of life, by which the dead shall be judged according to their Works. The whole Church believes, with the Holy Fathers, that that Book is nothing but the light by which God shews every Man all his actions, and generally all that's necessary as a foundation to the judgment God shall make of him. *We must understand, saith St. Austin, by this divine Book, a certain divine force, De Civit. Dei. l. 20. c. 14. by which every mans actions, as well good as bad, shall be called again into his memory; So that the mind shall know them all with an admirable exactness, that the conscience shall be convinced thereof by a certain knowledge. And all in particular and general shall be judged after the same manner.*

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This prospect, by which the Soul shall know all the thoughts which have passed through her mind, all the motions her heart hath formed, all the actions these motions have produced, all the consequences these actions have had, and shall know them with an evidence which will not leave her the least doubt, demands yet a prodigious extent of knowledge, and which surpasseth infinitely the ordinary ability of Mens minds. But yet this is but the least part of what God will make him know at this great day.

For he will not cause this great Assembly of all mankind to judge them simply in the same place; but to the end they may all be witnesses of the judgment he shall give to each of them. He will justify fully his conduct before them, and convince them all of the justness of all his Counsels as to Creatures.

Now for this 'tis necessary, that not only all men, as well the Elect as the Wicked, know one another mutually; but further that they know what each of them hath done, and why he is judged in such a manner. This knowledge
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is necessary for the just to glorifie God in the chastisement of the Wicked; and for the Wicked that they may be convinced that 'tis but just that God recompence the Elect. This is what is observed by the words of St. Paul, 1. Cor. 4. v. 5. *That God will discover what is hidden in the dark, and that he will make manifest the secrets of the heart.* For it is not for himself that he will discover them, because nothing can be hid from him; 'twill be for others, to whom he will make appear by his light the most secret thoughts of other Men. *Theodoret* and *Theophilact* conclude the same thing in this other passage of the same Apostle: *We must all be made manifest before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ.* And the Divines have made it an opinion expressed by *Liranius* in these terms: *Judicium apparebit omnibus justum, singulis videmibus bona vel mala aliorum.*

But this is not all. For, Saint *Augustin* adds, *De Civit. Dei. l. 20. c. 2.* That God will not make appear only in this day the equity of the judgment which he shall pronounce upon every Man, but also that of all the particular judgments he hath made in all Ages. That

That is to say, we shall then know why this Man hath been rich, that poor; this a slave, that free; this happy, that miserable; why this man lived a long time, this but a short time. Why God sends sometimes prosperities to the just, and Temporal evils to the Wicked; which as St. *Austin* says, is more incomprehensible than when he sends evils to good Men in this life, and temporal good to the Wicked; and in a word, we shall know the secret reasons of all that shall happen to each Man, whether good or bad. Now as all the accidents in the World are the effects of Gods secret counsels, it is evident that this knowledge includes all that's arrived since the beginning of the World to the end.

See here what will be the spectacle God will expose to all Mens minds, and by consequence to the Wicked, and which he will make them perceive so clearly, that they shall not have the least doubt.

If they shall have need of some small space of time to run over successively this prodigious multitude of different objects, as St. *Thomas* believes; we should always suppose that their minds shall

shall have an unconceivable nimbleness. But it seems that reason inclines to conclude, that they shall see them all in an instant, and by a single sight of the mind.

For the end why God will make them know all their own actions, and those of others, by little and little, will be to convince them of the justness of the Decree he shall pronounce against every one. Nevertheless if the sight of these actions were successive, that is to say, if the Soul conceived them but one after another, and that she had forbore to conceive one when she conceived another, it would be impossible that she should be able to see at once the proportion the Judges sentence shall have with all these actions: This comparison not being to be made without knowing at the same time, and in the same moment the two terms which we compare.

It is very true, that in this life we cannot be convinced of the equity of a Decree given against Criminals, without remembering all the crimes upon which it is grounded: But at least we must have a confused Idea of them. And that which causeth that we have no
need

need of a more distinct one, is because the proportion of the punishments ordered by the Judges of this World, is neither precise nor indivisible, and that they order oftentimes the like for very unequal crimes. And so it sufficeth to know confusedly those crimes to judge of the equity of the punishments. Besides that, the judgments of Men, being grounded only upon these confused knowledges, never have any absolute evidence.

It will not be so with the judgment God shall give of the Wicked. For there will be a proportion and a relation very particular and precise, as to all the differences of their crimes. *There shall be, saith St. Austin, as much diversity betwixt the punishments, as there shall be betwixt the sins. God will measure the chastisements, saith Origen, according to the quality, the number, and the Degree of sins. Nothing therein shall be omitted. There shall be no difference in the sins, how little soever they be, to which God hath not a regard in the chastisement.*

2. This admirable proportion of the punishment of Crimes, wherein the Justice of this judgment consists, shall be clearly known by every one of the Wicked.

Wicked. Now to know it, it seems necessary at the same time they shall comprehend the Décreé and perceive the punishments, that they do see at the same instant all that's useful thereunto as a foundation.

The same reason which proves that every one shall know in an instant all things for which he shall be judged, to the end he may be able to know the justice of what God will judge him for, shews likewise that to know the judgments God will give of other Men, every one ought to know all the ground thereof.

But as God will not shew his justice of condemnation to the Wicked, to the end he may convince them for a moment, but that they may never doubt of it, it seems that there is reason to conclude, that what they shall know then shall never be blotted out of their memories, and that the spectacle of the last judgment will be always present to them, without ever being able to forget it.

We may say likewise, that 'tis a necessary consequence of the state of the other life, which is firm, invariable, and opposite in that to the state of
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Travellers, where all is subject to changing. For as the Soul will not change the Will then any more, it appears not that she can change her Knowledge. What she loves she will always love: What she hates, she will always hate. All her passions will be Eternal, and by consequence all the knowledges which her passions shall form will be so likewise.

Also there is not any reason to believe that the sentiments of the Wicked, expressed in the Book of Wisdom, can be transitory ones. They say, and always will say in their hearts, what the wise Man made them say. They shall be in a perpetual trouble of envy against the just, in a continual repentance of their former life. They will never cease condemning themselves, and consequently they will always be mindful of their digressions and their sins. Now if they remember their sins, they will remember all. For why should they forget some, seeing they shall be judged for all, and shall suffer punishment for all?

It is evident by the same reason, that they will be mindful of all the sins of others. For the confusion wherewith
God

Book II. and of Hell. 145

God will cover the Wicked, in making their crimes known to all Men by his judgment, shall not be transitory. And therefore *David* to express that which he feared, and which he hoped to be delivered from, said to God that he should not be confounded for ever. *Non confundar in eternum.*

Now as this confusion happens in the Wicked from the manifestation of their Crimes to all men, it is clear that this manifestation subsists. For if men came to forget them and to think no more of them, this cause of confusion would be taken away from the Wicked, and consequently their confusion would not be eternal. Thus every one of them conserves the knowledge of other mens crimes, seeing that this knowledge is part of their punishment, which ought to be eternal.

That which makes us change our knowledge in this life, even when our passions subsist, is, that acting dependently of the Organs of the body, and the Organs being tired, it is necessary that the mind be separated from its object, and that it pass on to others which it knows by different im-

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pressions.

pressions. Moreover the Soul, being tied to the body, is constrained to have certain sentiments which hinder the continuity of her actions. We must Eat, Drink, and Sleep, otherwise we fall into sickness. All these interrupt the actions of the minde, and when they are interrupted, other objects take place of those wherewith she was busied. If she comes to be struck again anew, she does not always look upon it with the same face, nor receive the same impression.

But it is not so with a Soul separated from the body, or reunited to the body by the Resurrection. She hath none of these dependences. She sees always the objects in the same manner, and by all their faces. She has always the same passions, and in the same Degree. Thus these passions applying always their imagination in the same fashion, it is necessary that she see the same objects, and always in the same Degree of perspicuity.

If that were not, it would follow that the Soul would be unequally miserable at divers times. For doubtless there is amongst those objects some which touch her more than others; for
being

being unequal amongst themselves, we ought not to suppose they will stir up in those Souls sentiments alike violent. So by passing from one object to another, forgetting one to think of another, she will be sometimes more, sometimes less miserable. Now as the Wicked are always equally guilty, it seems that 'tis against Gods justice that they should be unequally punished.

Lastly, It is very hard to comprehend what should stir up an Idea when the Soul shall once have ceased to apply her self to it, and wherefore amongst these Ideas there should be some more durable than others: So that although there be some difficulty to conceive in the Wicked this terrible extent of the mind in so many different objects, there are fewer yet to suppose an actual and invariable application of the mind to all objects which shall torment them, than to imagine that they can apply themselves now to one and now to another, without seeing any cause of this variety, or that it can be made to accord with their state.

It seems then more reasonable to believe, that the sight which God shall give to each of the Wicked at the

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day of judgment of all their actions, and of all those of others; of the deformity of the Soul, of the enormity of her offences, of the contrariety there will be with the justice of God, of the happiness they shall have lost, of the punishments they shall be condemned to, and of all other things which he shall make them know at that moment, shall not be a transitory sight, but an eternal one. What is that dreadful cry wherewith he threatens the Wicked in *Isaiab*? C. 42 v. 14. *Sicut parturiens loquar*. By which he will break silence which he hath kept towards them during their whole lives, by letting them follow their passions, and live in ignorance of the state of their Souls, and the grandeur of their sins; and thus there is this difference betwixt Gods silence, and this cry of God, that this silence ends with this life, whereas this terrible Language shall be eternal, being nothing then but the constant and permanent impression, by which he will make them know for ever what they are, and what they deserve.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the prodigious violence of the motions
of the Soul of the Wicked.*

IF it be true, as it seems we cannot doubt, that the Souls knowlege separated from the body is far more lively, clear and extended than that of the Souls which are in the body; we ought not to question but that the passions do increase in the same proportion, and incline towards their objects with a violence which surpasses all our thoughts. We should be out of the body to comprehend exactly how much the Body out-weighs the Soul; how much it slackens all her motions; in darkening all her Ideas; but we may very well conceive in this life that there will be an extream difference betwixt these two states.

The Soul is only love. That's her Nature and Essence. She cannot be without love. She likewise understands not but to love. But her love is as it were a-sleep in this life, through the obscurity of her knowledge. As she penetrates little good or ill of ob-

jects, she is not carried thereunto with all her force. Her stupidity acts in regard of her passions, what Sleep doth in regard of the griefs of the body. She feels them but little, and she has only cold and languishing motions. But when death shall have as it were awakened her from this dulness, when her eyes shall be opened, when she shall have lively Ideas of all things, 'tis not to be conceived in what sort her love will increase, and with what impetuosity it will tend towards its object. 'Twill be like an unloosed bow, or a weight freed from what kept it in, and which begins to tend towards its center with all its activity and force.

When I speak of her love, I understand all her passions; for love comprehends them all. So this name includes her desires, her fears, her hatred, her despair, her jealousies; all her passions being only diverse forms which love takes according to the several relations it hath with its objects.

Now as the Wicked die void of the love of God, it is evident that their Souls will not be found filled with any other love than that of themselves and of Worldly things, and a general desire

fire of Felicity. So that becomming immoveable by death, all these passions will also become immoveable, and will act in them according to the impetuosity of the nature and state of the Soul. Thus, as they shall know at the same time that they are for ever excluded from this felicity they desire, that they shall never enjoy those Temporal things they love, that they shall never have this elevation, this honour, and this excellence they wish for, but that on the contrary they shall be for all eternity in reproach, in dejection, and in the griefs wherein they shall see themselves, it is impossible to conceive the excess of despair they shall be in. And all that can be said, is, that the violence of these sentiments will be conformable to the greatness of their loss, and the frightful circumstances which accompany it.

For as they shall know clearly these circumstances, so these circumstances will act upon them, and stir up griefs proportioned to the greatness of the object they shall see, and to the clearness with which they shall see it.

They will know that they have lost by their faults this happiness which they

shall see themselves excluded from; that others have not lost it like them; that 'tis Gods justice which has banisht them by an irrevocable Decree, and that they are deprived thereof by the searching after vile and perishable Goods. They will see that they love these Goods, and that they cannot chuse but love them. And all these sights, being lively and penetrating, will produce motives of rage, fury, and envy, against the Just, of hatred against God, and themselves, which surpass infinitely all that can be conceived, or be said thereof.

This is what may help to comprehend the Doctrine of St. *Austin*, whereof we have spoken already in another place, that God being the Sovereign Beatitude, and the Sovereign Glory, does not from himself draw the inward chastisements wherewith he punisheth the Soul, but effects by the marvellous Counsel of his Wisdom, that the same things which have served as instruments to men to Offend him, serve him to punish them withall. Conf. 67. *Ut quæ fuerunt delectamenta homini peccanti, sint instrumenta Domino punienti.*

And

And for this, there needs no more, but that the Soul know her true state, to abandon her to her passions, and to hinder her from satisfying them. The Soul does the rest, she makes her Hell, and she makes it by her proper passions which become her Executioners, and tear her in an unconceivable manner. All the Ideas which we can fancy thereof are infinitely short of what it is in effect. Nevertheless we may increase a little, by these following considerations, those which are made ordinarily thereof.

CHAP. IX.

Divers considerations which may help us to consider the greatness of the inward pains of the Damned.

I.

THE mortality and weakness of the body necessarily moderate all the griefs, whether interior or exterior, that can be suffered in this life, because if they pass a certain measure, they destroy the body; but there is no measure for those of the other life.

The Objects conceived by an immortal Soul act upon her according to all the force they have, and the decay of the Subject does not at all weaken the impression; the Soul being through her misfortune incapable of growing weak; and it is easie to judge thereby that the thoughts she hath at present have no proportion with those she shall have in the other life.

II.

The minde of man in this World is not always applyed to the Objects which afflict it. It is oftentimes withdrawn, and though it desired always to be fixed to it, it would be hindered by the necessities of this life, and by the weakness of the body. But all the griefs of the Damned shall be in such a manner continual, that the Soul shall never cease from being glued and applyed to the Object of her pain, without being able to free her self one single moment.

III.

The multiplication of the evils do not always augment the sentiment in this life, because the Soul forms only of these evils one confused Object, which makes but one single Object,
and

and the connexion she hath with the body makes her incapable of suffering any more than one certain measure. But it is not so in the other. For the Soul being free and disengaged, cannot see things other than they are, she fancyes no more these confused Ideas. So as much distinct knowledge as she shall have of afflicting Objects, so much shall she have of distinct Griefs which shall be as lively as her knowledge, her Will not being less vast nor less great than her Understanding.

IV.

We scarcely feel any evils in this life, but such as have something that's evil at the very moment we feel them, and at most what they may have thereof in the space of this life, which is not long. Although our imagination encrease them often, it nevertheless places limits thereunto, because it extends them no farther than this life. But what causes in the damned an increase of grief which cannot be expressed, is, that they join to each of these evils the weight of Eternity. They prevent it by their thought, and unite in the time present what they ought to suffer in the continuance of their torments,
which

which makes each of these evils in some sort infinite.

V.

'Tis the effect of grief to apply the Soul to the small parts of time. The application to agreeable things, makes time slip away without being aware thereof. It seems as if many parts thereof past away all at a time. An hour, a day, a year of pleasure are all nothing; but a day, nay even an hour of grief is very long and tedious, and so much the longer as the grief is violent. If that of a man who is cut, should last a quarter of an hour, no man could withstand it, nay even no man would expose himself thereunto. What length then will the time be to those who shall be in great griefs, and what will it be for them but an eternity of griefs, seeing that a small space of time will appear to them an eternity. We reckon days in moderate evils, hours in those that are more violent, minutes in sharp griefs. But those of the damned being extream, they will reckon in some sort moments, and there are an infinite in the least part of time.

VI.

VI.

There are no evils in this life which may not be ballanced by a great number of benefits which uphold the Soul. If a Friend forsake us, there are others we may rely upon. At least we see a great many People who do not hate us, and that serves to moderate our sadness; when we shall see our selves even abandoned and hated of all, we shall see yet a haven in death. Moreover the evils are not universal, nor deprive us of all our happiness. There remains always divers Objects upon which we may cast our eyes without being troubled. We may be comforted in the loss of one fence by the pleasure of another. Who sees not colours, hears voices and sounds. He who hath one kinde of sickness hath not all others, nor all the evils of this life; and the applying the mind to these goods which always remain in great number to the miserable, weakens, even without their thinking thereof, the violence of their evils.

But it is not the same with the Damned; what way soever they turn their Souls, they see no Objects but such as afflict them. They are deprived of all consolation and pleasure. Nothing

thing appeases their evils and every thing encreases them.

This privation from all good is a dreadful thing for a Soul who lives and upholds her self only by the enjoyment thereof, and whose essence consists in seeking and loving it, and we do not reflect enough upon the excess of the desolation which will spring necessarily from the clear knowledge these miserable Souls shall have; that there is not any more good for them to expect in eternity, and shall see nothing but what afflicts them.

VII.

The power man hath of deceiving himself in this life adds much to the diminishing the thought of his evils. If we condemn him justly, he is persuaded that 'tis unjustly, and thus gives away the good which was taken from him. He flatters himself by these hopes, and allwages his fears through some rash assurances. He thinks he is esteemed when disdained. He dissembles his faults. He takes uncertain things for certain. He sees only what he has a mind of; and imagins he sees what indeed he sees not. But 'twill be quite otherwise in respect of the Wicked.

God

God will not permit them to be ignorant of their evils. His light will open their Eyes in spight of them. They must necessarily see themselves such as they are, and their evils likewise, without any power to diminish the least part by the error of their imagination.

VIII.

Wrath and indignation which Men conceive in this life find a kind of consolation in the designs of vengeance they fancy, whether real or chimerical. They flatter themselves in these miseries, by the Idea that they shew compassion to some one, or that they have not deserved them, that they are the effects of hazard or of a misery wherein they have no share. Even-despair and rage have I know not what pleasure in the confused Idea of subtracting themselves either from the sight of Men, or from life itself. But the Wicked shall have none of these consolations how miserable soever they be. They shall see clearly that they want absolutely power to hurt those they hate. They shall be convinced that they deserve all the Ills they have suffered, that they have drawn them upon themselves

selves by their own faults ; and they shall hate the justice which condemned them thereto. They shall no ways hope to be able to forbear being and living. They shall know the inflexibility of their judge, and of their hearts, and by consequence the immutability of their evils, and this thought unable to render them more constant therein, because they shall see nothing wherenpon they can build their hopes.

IX.

If Mens pride trouble them in this life, because they think always that Men do not render them what is their due, nor judge favourably enough of them, it comforts them on the other side, by the portraicture it makes them draw of themselves, which is always pleasing. But the pride wherewith the Wicked shall be possessed in the next life will not give them this comfort. They shall see nothing in themselves that is pleasing. All will fright them and cover them with shame.

X.

One single man who hates us is so troublesom an Object that we can scarcely suffer him. And when we apply our selves thereto a little lively, this
thought

thought is capable to take away the sentiment of all other human Goods we possess. The consideration that *Haman* had in the Kingdom of *Ahasuerus*, and all the Goods he enjoyed there, caused him much less joy, than the disdain he thought *Mordecai* had for him did cause vexation. What then will be the state of a Soul, who, desiring love and esteem with a much more violent passion than that we can have in this World, shall see her self the Object of hatred, not of one single Man, but of God, of the Angels, of the Saints, of the Wicked, and of the Devils, and that she shall see no sentiment of affection, esteem, or compassion for her?

XI.

Who can conceive what it is to hate an Enemy with an unreasonable hatred, to wish his destruction, and yet to see himself for ever in his hands, subject to his power, thrown under his feet, in an absolute insufficiency of resisting him? 'Tis the condition wherein the Wicked shall be eternally, in respect of God. They shall hate eternally his power and Justice. They could wish that he were not at all, and yet they shall see themselves eternally in his

his hands, unable to avoid any of the chastisements which this justice shall make them suffer.

XII.

There is no afflicting Object which acts a little lively upon the mind, but causes so unsupportable a pain, that it could wish to be no more so it may be separated from it. Therefore all the lively passions have swayed these who have been agitated thereby to take away their own life. Some have killed themselves, to avoid seeing a victorious Enemy, others not able to suffer reproaches; and others have killed themselves to fly the shame of some crime. If this sentiment spring in Men, whose evils are so small, and counterpoised by so many goods which remain, what will it be with the Wicked, who shall have nothing but evils, and horrible evils, without any good. We must not then doubt but they wish with an excessive passion the destruction of their being, and that when their Souls shall be reunited to their bodies, they will endeavour to forsake them; which caused St *Austin* to say, Aug. de Civit. l. 21. c. 3. *That the first death chaseth away the Soul from the*

the body whether she will or no, and the second keeps her in the body. Prima mors animam nolentem pellet de corpore. Secunda mors animam nolentem tenet in corpore. Behold then the state of the Wicked. They will haste to death and to annihilation with an insatiable impetuosity, and yet cannot arrive at it. They shall hate their lives, and beings but shall not be able to destroy them. Lastly, they shall always die without ever dying. They shall be tormented, saith St. Gregory, l. 15. Moral. c. 11. but these torments cannot destroy them. They shall die, and they shall live at the same time. These shall endeavour not to be, but they shall subsist. These are terrible things to hear. But how much more terrible shall they be for those who shall experience them?

XIII.

The source of all interior pleasures and griefs is in the will, according as these desires are satisfied and opposed. Who then can comprehend the miserable condition of a Soul which shall not be satisfied in any of her desires, but contradicted in all. The Will shall be then Sovereignly acting, but she shall have nevertheless no motion which afflicts her not. She shall obtain nothing
at

at all of what she shall desire. She shall suffer all that she hath an horror for. This is the argument St. Bernard makes use of to shew the excess of this misery: Lib. 5. de. Confid. c. 1. *Quid tam poenale quam semper velle quod nunquam erit? Quid tam damnatum quam voluntas addicta huic necessitati volendi nolendique, ut ad utrumlibet. Jam sicut non nisi perverse ita non nisi misere moveatur. In aeternum non obtinebit quod vult; & quod non vult in aeternum nibilominus sustinebit.*

CHAP. X.

Of the pain of Fire.

AS Men have a very great Idea of grief which Fire causes, the imagination can scarcely advance any further; they are inclined to lessen this Idea, by changing the Fire wherewith God threatens the Wicked into a Spiritual and Metaphorical Fire, which they think is not near so grievous.

This hath caused the opinion of those who have pretended, as St. Austin reports, that Hell Fire shall be no other thing than a trouble for the loss of eternal happiness,

happinefs, wherewith the Wicked shall be afflicted; which they ground, in respect of the Devils and Souls separated from the body, upon this argument, that 'tis impossible for a material Fire to act upon Beings absolutely Spiritual, as the Devils are.

But it is easie to shew that this opinion is as little solid, according to the light of reason, as it seems contrary to Scripture and Tradition. For how little soever we examin what it is we call grief, we shall find that 'tis altogether as conceivable, that Spirits without bodies are as susceptible thereof, as Spirits joyned to bodies.

Some ask how the Fire can act upon the Devils? And I demand how it can act upon living Souls, which are no less Spiritual than Devils and Angels? For 'tis not the body that feels pains. Let the Soul be applyed elsewhere, you may burn the body if you will, it will feel nothing of pain, as it happens in certain extraordinary sicknesses. It is true, that this pain passeth from the Body to the Soul, that is to say, that the motion which is made in the Body, stirs up in the Soul this sentiment which is called grief. But it is not through a
necessary

necessary consequence of this corporal motion, which has no connection with this sentiment; 'tis by the Decree of Gods Will, who hath establisht that this sentiment should be excited in the Soul, at the same time as this corporal motion should be in the Body. 'Tis impossible to find any other reason for it, and there is no more to be done but to make use of it to shew how the Devils may feel the impressions of a material Fire. For likewise 'tis only to say that God hath ordained they shall have this sense of grief when such and such a motion shall be made in the substance wherein they shall be inclosed.

There is then no necessity, even according to reason, to conceive another Fire than what we know, nor another grief than what we experience, when acting upon the body.

The Devils are as susceptible thereof as Men, and so 'tis not strange at all that the Reprobates and Devils may be threatned with the same Fire by the Decree of their Judge: *Ita maledicti in Ignem æternum qui paratus est Diabolus & Angelis ejus.*

By

By taking therefore this Fire which shall cause the punishment of the Wicked for a true and corporal Fire, it seems that we ought not to be much troubled to augment the Idea of grief it may cause, seeing that we conceived it already as something unsupportable, and that the crueltie of the most barbarous Men were not able to invent greater torments.

Nevertheless the Fathers assure us that this Fire hath infinitely more force and activity than ours, and that the pain this ordinary Fire causes is nothing in comparison to that Hell Fire causeth. *Non erit iste Ignis sicut focus tuus*, saith St. *Austin*. And reason inclines us to conclude it from some circumstances of the state of the other life.

For the grief this Fire causeth, is not a simple action of the Fire upon the Body. It is the application of the Soul to this motion. If she did not apply her self to it at all, she would suffer nothing at all, and she feels more of it in proportion as she applies her self more to it. Now 'tis certain, the application of the Soul in this life is always weak because of the Organs of the body whereof she depends, which being

being weak and delicate will destroy themselves by too violent action. But in the other life the organs of the Body being incorruptible, the Soul will apply her self to the objects which will cause her grief with all the activity of her nature.

The Fire of this life never acts universally upon the whole body; otherwise it would destroy it in a moment, and would hardly cause any grief or pain. It must, to the end we may feel it lively, act only upon some few parts, and render them in a short time insensible, by consuming them. But if it did act upon all the parts without destroying the body, it would doubtless be a redoubling of the pain. And it is properly what shall come to pass in Hell. They shall be, *says the Evangelist*, absolutely penetrated with Fire, as flesh salted is penetrated with Salt. *Omnis enim Igne salietur, & omnis victima sale salietur.* The Fire will act upon all the parts of their bodies, as it acts upon all the parts of a red hot Iron. There will be neither nerves, fibres, nor tendons, which shall not be moved, and cause a violent pain. And as none of these parts will ever be consumed by the Fire, but
will

will remain always in the same agitation, the punishment will always subsist in the same violence.

This pain will be so much greater, as it is properly that which shall be imposed upon them by Gods justice, and where it shall act by it self, all other pains being nothing but consequences of their wretchedness and malice, except God act there otherwise than by leaving them to themselves.

I shall make no difficulty to relate here what *St. Teresa* said of a Vision by which God shewed her something of the punishment of Hell; and I am not afraid to say, that 'twould be a violating of the mind not to be affrighted at it, and to think it but an imagination. We should be assured that 'twas one, to have reason to slight it. Now we are very far from being able to have this assurance in respect of some Visions which she relates. On the contrary, we may truly say, that there being two things which may be doubted of in these kind of things; First, If the person who relates them be sincere; Secondly, Whether it is not an illusion of the Imagination; persons of sense who shall examin without prevention

the works of this illustrious Saint, will be presently fully convinced of the first, which is her real sincerity; and in regard of the other, they will have much ado to persuade themselves, that imaginations put Souls in a state and condition so Holy and so Divine as that wherein it seems God placed her by these visions, nor that God was willing to joyn so many miraculous effects to Phanatical illusions.

See then in what sort she tells what God shewed her concerning the pains of Hell. *Life of St. Teresa, c. 32.*

“ Being one day in Prayer, said she, I
 “ found my self in an instant in Hell,
 “ without being sensible how I was carried
 “ thither. I only comprehended
 “ that it pleased God I should see the
 “ place which the Devils had prepared
 “ for me, and my sins deserved. That
 “ lasted but a very short while. But although I
 “ should live yet many years,
 “ I do not believe that it would be possible
 “ for me to forget it.

“ The entrance appeared to me like
 “ one of those little narrow long Streets
 “ which are shut at one end, and such
 “ as would be that of an Oven, very low,
 “ very close, and very obscure. The bottom

“tom seemed to me to be as it were ve-
 “ry filthy dirt, of an insupportable
 “stench, and full of a great number
 “of venomous creeping creatures. At the
 “end of this Street was a hollow made
 “in the Wall, in form of a Niech, where-
 “in I saw my self lodged very close:
 “And although all I have now said
 “were yet much more frightful than I
 “represent it, it may pass for pleasing
 “in comparision of what I suffered when
 “I was in this kind of Niech.

“This torment was so terrible, that
 “all that can be said cannot represent
 “the least part of it. I felt my Soul burn
 “in so horrible a Fire, that I had much
 “ado to describe it such as it was, see-
 “ing that I could not even conceive it.
 “I have experienced the pains the
 “most unsupportable by relation of
 “Physicians, that can be endured in
 “this life, as well by this contraction
 “of the nerves, as in many other ways,
 “by other evils than the Devils have
 “made me feel; but all those pains
 “are nothing in comparision to what I
 “suffered then, joyn’d with the horror
 “I had to see that those pains were
 “eternal; and even that is yet but
 “little, compared to the pain and ago-

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ny wherein the Soul finds her self.
She thinks she is choaked, strangled;
and her affliction and despair go to
such an excess, that I should undertake
in vain to relate them. 'Tis nothing
to say that it seemed she was torn in
pieces, because that would be a
strange violence which would take a-
way her life, whereas 'tis she that
tears and cuts her self in pieces. As
to that interior Fire and despair which
are as it were the height of so many
horrible torments, I confess I am less
able to represent them, I know not
what made me endure them; but I
felt my self burn and as it were hacked
in pieces; which me thought was the
most terrible pain of all.

In so frightful a place, there re-
mains not the least hopes of recei-
ving any consolation, nor is there
room enough either to sit or to lie
down in. I was there as in a hole
made in the Wall, and these hor-
rible Walls (against the order of na-
ture) squeeze and press what they in-
close. All is stifled in that place.
There are nothing but thick clouds
without any mixture of light, and I
do not comprehend how it can hap-
pen

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“pen, that whereas there is no light
“there, we should see what is most trou-
“blesome to the sight.

“Although it be about six years that
“what I even now related happened,
“I am yet so frightned at it in writing
“it, that methinks my Blood is Frozen
“with fear in my veins. Thus what evils
“and pains soever I experience, I can-
“not remember what I suffered then,
“but all that can be endured here must
“seem nothing. It seems to me that
“we complain without cause. And I
“consider as one of the greatest favours,
“that God hath shewn me a thing so
“terrible as that which I have related,
“when I consider how much it hath
“profited me, as well to hinder me
“from apprehending the afflictions of
“this life, as to oblige me to suffer
“with patience, and to give God
“thanks, for that I have cause to be-
“lieve that he will deliver me from
“these terrible and dreadful pains,
“whose continuation will be eternal.

Doubtless God shewed to this Saint
only the Image of a part of Hell, and
so much as was requisite for the good
of her Soul. So we have reason to
conclude that Hell in all reallity is

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quite another thing than this Image
she hath drawn thereof.

CHAP. XI.

*Consequences that ought to be drawn from
the considerations of these pains.*

I Do not pretend to shew at large
here all the consequences which
reason may draw from this frightful state
which we have newly represented, and
wherewith all Men are threatned; for
there is hardly any thing in morality
which does not follow it. I pretend
only to shew some of the most gross
and most sensible of them, and princi-
pally those which the Fathers them-
selves have drawn from thence.

The first of these thoughts which ought
to be given us, is, that 'tis not only Faith
and Religion that condemns the con-
duct of those who believing that there
is a Hell to be feared, do not make it
their principal care to avoid it; but
that it ought to appear intirely unrea-
sonable according to the ordinary un-
derstanding of common sense.

Truly

Truly there is something in the-vanity of human mind which may incline to approve and esteem a Man who seeing himself condemned, and no hopes of avoiding it, nor any consideration of the other life, should employ three or four hours which he shall have at the time of execution, in playing and diverting himself. And this is that which makes us not troubled at the praises *Seneca* gives to a Roman named *Caninus*, who expecting that *Caligula's* Ministers should come to execute the Decree of death which he had given against him, was busied about playing at Chess.

But if on the one side the punishment of this Man was horrible, and if on the other he might avoid it by employing three or four hours in doing juster and lawful actions, is there any Man would not count him a fool and an extravagant fellow, if the love of a ridiculous pastime should hinder him from embracing so lawful means to avoid so shameful and cruel a death?

However this resolution which we never take in regard of Temporal death, is taken daily in regard of Eternal. We expose our selves thereto, we

throw our selves headlong therein-
to, for pleasures, interests, for hon-
nors, which have not so much pro-
portion to this dreadful misery where-
to we engage our selves, as three hours
of play have to a cruel death. Also St.
Austin having represented in one of his
Sermons the excess of this disorder of
Mans mind, concludes expressly, that
Faith must be blotted out of them.

Hell Fire, saith this holy Doctor, shall
not be like to that which you may feel
here below. And yet if you be threatned
to have your hand burnt, you will use all
your endeavours, how bad soever, to avoid
it. God to oblige you to do well,
threatens you *Eternal mischief*, if you do
not, and yet you do not do it. The threats
of some evil, what ever it may be, should
not be able to engage you to do ill, no
more then hinder you from doing well:
And God himself does not threaten you
with any thing less than *Eternal Fire*, if
you do ill, and do not do good. From
whence then comes it that you make so
little account of these threats? 'Tis doubt-
less because you have not faith.

Indeed we must believe nothing at
all of that Faith which makes impressi-
on upon the heart: But it may be done
yet

yet, and it happens even very often, that we do not cease to believe it by another perswasion which is only in the mind. Thus we believe it and we do not believe it. The heart causes in the minde false judgments conformable to its inclinations. It makes it prefer the present before that that's to come, and to look upon the goods and evils of this life as some thing more real than all that can be said of the goods of the other, and reason suffers not at the same time to conclude the contrary, but after so cold and speculative a manner, that it is not capable to with-hold the inclinations of the heart.

Nevertheless, when we are careful to fortify our Reason in applying it more to these objects, the fear we have of it becomes capable thereby to retain at least the hand, if it does not cure the heart, and so cut off the outward effects of the passions, if it do not stop the inward motions; and in separating us thus from the objects which encrease concupiscence, it prepares the place for charity.

'Tis by means of this fear, animated
by the hopes of recompences which
God promises to the just, that we are
capable

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capable of disdaining all the promises of Men. Tremble, saith St. Austin, at the evils wherewith the Almighty threatens you. Love what he promiseth you, and you will not value Mens promises nor threats. (In Epist. Joan. tr. 3.) *Exhorresse quod minatur Omnipotens. Ama quod promittit Omnipotens, & vilesit omnes Mundus sive promittens sive terrens.*

For all this we ought to labour strongly to establish our selves in this principle, whereof reason cannot doubt, provided that it give attention to it, that the evils of the other life being so horrible and so far surpassing the greatness of all the goods and evils of this present life, they ought to serve us as a rule and measure to judge of these here, and that this we ought not at all to behold under the Idea of good, but under the Idea of a great evil, all that leads to Hell.

'Tis then by this means we must judge of the difference of the states and conditions of this World. All those wherein it is difficult to save our selves, ought to appear misfortunate to us, and we ought on the contrary to look upon as advantageous all those which are favourable to salvation.

It is by this we ought to rule our joy and sadness, in all successes and in all accidents that happen to us. For to know whether we have reason to rejoyce or to be afrighted thereat, we need only ask our selves whether they render salvation easy or difficult to us.

These are common truths. But 'tis not a common thing to have them lively imprinted in the mind, to conform our judgments and actions thereunto, to look upon all Worldly things by a light which we draw from thence.

'Tis also a very common thought to say as St. *Austin* did, that we ought to make use of the consideration of Hell to despise and set at nought all the evils of the Body: Tem. 9. de verbis Excid. c. 4. *Unusquisque Christianus quando aliam quam afflictionem Corporis patitur, Gehennam cogitet, & videat quam leve est quod patitur.* But 'tis not very common to reduce it into practice.

What St. *Austin* saith in another place upon this Subject, gives us reason to add, that as Hell ought to make us despise all the evils of this life, so the evils of this life ought to make us remember Hell, and to make use of it

as a continual advertisement to think seriously how to avoid it. For this holy Doctor doth teach us in one of his Sermons, that light chastisements in this life only tend to put us in mind of amending, to the end that God may have reason to punish us in his rigor; that this Sovereign Judge may make us know thereby that he will come presently, and that this conduct is an effect of the design he hath, that we may not be absolutely lost. *If he had a design, saith he, to condemn us, he would be silent. Never any one, having a design to strike another, cries out unto him, Have a care.*

Thus as it is evident that the Earth is full of Gods chastisements, and that there is none who sometimes does not experience them, it follows, that God makes this terrible but wholsom voice Eccho over all the Earth, That Hell is at hand, and the Judge comes. Mortals, *saith he to them thereby*, have a care of your selves, and banish from your hearts all that may condemn you to the Eternal Fire. Behold what these Scourges God sends over the Earth, these Wars, these Plagues, these Famines, these Calamities both publick and particular, signify. They are like Sparks
which

which exalt themselves from Hell Fire, which is the treasury of Gods wrath. But 'tis by counsel of mercy he permits them to go out, that he may give us notice by that means to shun these terrible Fires wherein he will cast the Wicked headlong in the other life.

Even when these prospects of Hell shall not be necessary to make us fly sin, and that we shall arrive to that Degree where Charity banisheth all fear, which is very rare in this World, and where it is very dangerous to imagin to arrive when God has not as yet raised us thereunto; they would nevertheless be useful and necessary for us, as well to entertain in us the sentiments of acknowledging that we ought to have them, as to excite thereby a compassion we ought to have for Souls who precipitate themselves into this Abyss of evils. And it is but reading what St. Teresa said upon this Subject with that inimitable eloquence which sprung from the zeal of her Charity, to judge what this consideration should produce in us if we had as much Charity as she.

"How, saith she, *Meditat* II. upon the Command. can I be able to express what my grief is, when I represent to my

“my self the state of a Soul, who ha-
 “ving seen her self in the World always
 “considerable, always loved, always o-
 “beyed, always caressed, always re-
 “spected, at the very moment she leaves
 “this life, shall see she is lost for ever,
 “and shall clearly comprehend that her
 “misery shall never have end; that it
 “will assist her nothing at all to divert
 “her mind with the truths of Faith, as
 “she was accustomed to do; she shall
 “see her self separated and as it were
 “forced from her recreations and plea-
 “sures, even when she shall think she
 “hath not as yet begun to taste them,
 “because in effect all that’s acted in
 “this life is nothing but a blast and a
 “vapor; she shall see herself environ’d
 “with this so hideous and cruel com-
 “pany with which she must suffer Eter-
 “nally; she shall see her self plunged in-
 “to a stinking Lake full of Serpents
 “which shall exercise upon her all their
 “rage and fury; and lastly, she shall
 “find her self as it were swallowed up
 “in this horrible obscurity, which ha-
 “ving nothing but a darksome flame as
 “a light, shall not permit her to see
 “any thing but what may maintain for,
 “ever her pains and torments..

" O how inconsiderable is what I say
 " to what it is ! O Lord ! and who then
 " hath cast in this manner dirt into the
 " Eyes of the Soul, that she hath not
 " percieved this dismal state until
 " she should see her self reduced there-
 " unto for ever ? Who hath stopped
 " their Ears in such a manner, that they
 " cannot hear what has been told them.
 " a thousand and a thousand times of
 " the greatness and the eternity of these
 " torments ? O life eternally miserable !
 " O punishments without end ! Is it pos-
 " sible that those do not fear you at
 " all, who fear the least inconveni-
 " encies of the body, that they cannot
 " suffer with patience one nights lodg-
 " ing in a hard bed ?

" O Lord ! how I regret the time where-
 " in I have not comprehended these
 " truths ! But, O God, seeing thou know-
 " est the displeasure I suffer in seeing
 " the great number of those who will
 " not understand them, make at least,
 " I conjure thee, that thy light may il-
 " luminate some Soul which may be
 " capable to inlighten many others. I
 " do not ask thee, O my God, to do
 " it for the love of me being unwor-
 " thy thereof. But I beg it through
 the

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“ the merits of thy Son. Cast thy Eyes,
“ O my God, upon his wounds. And
“ when he hath pardoned them, par-
“ don us also the sins we have commit-
“ ted against thee.

Thus as it appears by the example of this Saint, the fear of Hell is not only the introduction of Charity, when it is not as yet mistress of the heart; it is not only the guardian thereof, when it is yet very feeble and imperfect; it is also the nourishment thereof, when it is purest and most perfect, with this sole difference, that in the two first states it looks upon us more than others, and in the third upon others more than us.

FIRST

FIRST
TREATISE,
OF THE
Four Last Ends of
M A N.

BOOK III.
Paradise, or Heaven.

CHAP. I.

*That it is profitable to treat of Heaven
having treated of Hell. How much
the knowledge of these two great Objects
is linked to that of Mans nature.*

After the fear of torments, nothing
makes more impression upon Mens
minds than the hopes of recompence, which
has given occasion to those who made
Laws, to join ordinarily these two mo-
tives.

tives together, to keep Men in their duty.

God follows almost the same order in the operations of his grace. For having shaken the heart by the fear of torments wherewith he threatens the Wicked, he draws it to him self by the hopes of the glory he promiseth to the just.

To follow then the same Degrees, reason commands, that having proposed the fittest Objects to fill the Soul with terror, which are Death, Judgment, and Hell; we propose to them those which are the properest to attract their desires, which are the ineffable and eternal goods God hath reserved for his Chosen.

It is much more necessary to joyn these Objects together, by how much we know not how in any sort to conceive them well separately. For the principal part of the Misery of the Wicked consists in the loss of the Happiness of the Just; and the deliverance from the miserable state of the Wicked, causeth a considerable part of the Felicity of the happy Souls.

Not only the knowledge of each of these two Ends is inseparable from that of the other; but they are both so strictly tied by the Nature of Man, that we cannot

cannot know them well without knowing Man, nor know Man well without the knowledge of them.

Truly if we examine the Source of all the vain Fancies of Philosophers touching Sovereign Happiness and Misery, we shall find these Fancies have had no other rise than the ignorance they were in concerning the Nature of Man. For it being imagin'd that the Soul was not capable of other Actions than those they observed in her in this Life; as those Actions are all weak and languishing, they were of opinion that she could not be fully satisfied with a fading Happiness, such a one as that which we have in this World; and that she hath no other Evils to fear but those she may feel here.

But had they well apprehended, that this Soul which is at present in this languishing state of Darkeness and Obscurity, must be by Death placed in another state, where her Knowledge will be infinitely larger and clearer, and her Desires more impetuous and violent; they would have changed all their Idea's, and by following this Light they would have come very near the knowledge of Heaven and Hell.

For

For by this 'tis clear, that the Soul coming to be separated from the Body, and placed in a state of Liberty, will begin to tend towards the Objects of her Love with quite another vehemency than that wherewith she is carried at present; and thus casting her self towards these Objects with this violence, either she will enjoy them, and consequently she will have a Joy so much greater as her Love shall be violent; or she will not enjoy them, and then she will be melancholy proportioned to the vehemency of her Love; seeing that Sadness is only the Sentiment of being deprived of the Object we love.

This concludes already, That the Soul must necessarily be at the hour of her Death in a State of extreme Joy or Sadness; and that by her Nature she is incapable of indifferent Sentiments.

But we shall urge these Consequences further, if we add thereto two Principles which Reason and Faith render evident. The first is, That 'tis impossible God's Justice can grant to the Soul in the other Life, which is fixt and immovable, the Enjoyment of her Desires which shall be disorderly and criminal. The second is, That not being made to enjoy the
Creatures,

Creatures, all desire she shall have to enjoy them is wicked and disorderly.

From whence it follows, That all the Souls who go out of this World, and shall have no love but for Creatures, shall be deprived thereof for ever; because God cannot permit that this Desire, being bad, may be satisfied with the enjoyment of their Objects; and consequently, they shall fall into a terrible Sadness: And that, on the contrary, all those who shall love God, who is the only legitimate Object of their Love, shall be united to him, and enjoy him, because if they should not enjoy him, they would be miserable; and as it is unjust that they be joyful in loving what they ought not to love, it would be unjust that they should be sad in loving what they ought to love.

See here in what manner the knowledge of Mans Nature conducts us to conceive Hell and Heaven. And it may be said also, That the knowledge of Heaven and Hell makes us know what Man's Nature is: For, the necessity there is of partaking of the one or the other of these two Ends, is an evident proof of its Greatness; for it shews that God designs it nothing of mediocrity; it must be

be either very happy or very miserable, there is no *medium* for it : It is born to be heaped with all sorts of Good, without any mixture of Evil ; or overwhelmed with all sorts of Evil, without the least tincture of Good : and thus it is not made for the World , because all there is a mixture of Good and Evil ; and the Good or Evil which may be had there, is not very great.

This Life through which we ought to pass, is not given it but to make choice of the one or the other of these two states ; and this choice is the only employment and the only exercise of this present Life : For 'tis not done by one single Action ; they contribute all thereunto, and serve all to advance it towards the one or the other.

There is only this difference, upon this Point, betwixt Hell and Heaven ; That to fall into Hell , it sufficeth to take the way that leads thereunto , without any need of desiring it ; but to arrive at Felicity and Happiness , we must have a sincere desire for it. So, as we cannot desire it without knowing it, our first care ought to be to labour to acquire this Knowledge : And it is what this Book is intended for.

CHAP. II.

*That 'tis a strange thing that true beatitude is
so little desired by Men. Heresie of the mind,
Heresie of the heart upon this Subject.*

ALthough there is nothing so different as Heaven and Hell, and methinks that if the horror which causeth the consideration of the first of these Objects, hinders Men from thinking thereof, the fulness of all the good which is discovered in the other should withhold and stop their thoughts there; it is nevertheless true, that Men scarcely think more of Heavn than Hell, that they are as little concerned for it, and that they live very near in a equal oblivion of the one and the other.

This ought to appear presently more strange than the first, (*Aug. De. Trinit. L. 13. c. 4.*) The most stirring, and the most essential desire Man hath is that of being happy. This desire is imprinted in the bottom of Nature, and disperseth it self into all its actions. Man aims only at this end, he acts nothing but for that purpose, nothing can please him but through this consideration. *Man hath
never*

never been without this desire, there hath been none, there could have been none, saith St. Austin in Ps. 128. m. 1. and in Ps. 32. without it. It is not necessary to excite it in them. Finally, though this inclination be the source of all the divisions of Mankind, by the bad use they make thereof, there is nothing in which which they can be more uniform than in this inclination.

Saint *Austin* adds in another place That this desire of Beatitude is so ingraven in the heart of all Mankind, that although sin and misery be inseparable, they are not inclined nevertheless to sin, but that they may avoid being miserable. *Cum sit malitia individua comes miseria, isti perverti non solum mali esse volunt, & miseri nolunt, quod fieri non potest; sed ideo mali esse volunt ne miseri fiant.*

Nevertheless it is true, that this erring is more easie to be comprehended in those who being ignorant of the lights of faith apply this general desire of being happy through error, to some objects which render them effectively miserable.

But what is more surprising, is, that those on whom God has bestowed the
in-

incomparable favour of declaring to them this great and happy news of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the inconceivable happiness he has promised to those who shall be partakers thereof, which he had kept hid the space of four thousand years from all the World, are nevertheless so little touched therewith, that this great object is that whereon they think the least, and which makes the least impressions upon them.

For does it not seem, that this violent inclination which they have of being happy, should unite all their passions and all their desires towards this ineffable happiness God discovers to them? They seek it with disquiet and trouble; they have experienced, a thousand ways, that they can find on Earth nothing but false happiness: we shew them a true and solid one; they grant they believe it. From whence comes it then that they do not make it the most agreeable and the most continual occupation of their minds? 'Tis doubtless whereunto reason inclines them; but they have in them a principle stronger than reason, which hinder them, which is the corruption of the heart.

For it is to be observed, that there is, upon this Subject two kind of Heresies; the one may be called the Heresies of the mind, because the mind approves them, consents thereunto, and maintains them with all its light: The other may be called the Heresies of the heart, because they spring from the passions which force the mind to frame Ideas and judgments which are conform thereto, although there be at the same time in this mind contrary lights which belie these false judgments.

The divers judgments of Philosophers touching beatitude, are of the nature of those which we have named Heresies of the mind. This matter hath appeared to them very fit to exercise their subtlety and eloquence. They have divided themselves upon this point into divers Sects. Some have placed happiness, I mean beatitude, in the body; some in the mind; others in both. *Varron* joyning some circumstances thereunto, makes the number of their opinions amount to 288. and *St. Austin* reduceth them to twelve, by cutting off the unnecessary differences.

Christian Religion hath had no trouble to destroy these Imaginations of
Philosophers

Philosophers, whereof the most part served rather as Subjects to their Discourses and Disputes, than as an End to their Desires, or Rule to their Actions.

But it hath not rooted out with the same facility the Heresies of the second kind, which we have named the Heresies of the Heart. Christian Religion hath found one of this nature upon the Subject of the Beatitude, diffused into all Men, which makes them establish the Sovereign Good in this Life, in the Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures, of curious Objects, of Honours, of the Glory and Power of the World, and of all that leads thereunto.

This Heresie is nothing but the tripple Concupiscence to which St. *John* doth reduce all Mens Passions and Actions, when he says, *cap. 1. ver. 16. All that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life.*

So this is the general Heresie of Mankind, which first corrupts the Hearts of Men, and after that their Minds.

We need only seek in this universal Heresie the cause of this coldness and this insensibility, which is observed in most Men in respect of true Beatitude.

Christian Religion finds it established and domineering in their Hearts; and although it banish it by its Light of the Mind from some, and that it cure likewise their Heart from what is mortal and criminal; yet it destroys it not entirely: so that there remains always some root at the bottom of the Soul, until Death, which always produceth therein some gust for the Goods of the Earth, and some disgust for those of Heaven.

Those Goods which Religion proposeth to us are not present Goods, and Concupiscence desires present Goods: It must expect them; and Concupiscence being hasty and violent, will not expect: We do not see them by the Senses; and Concupiscence is concerned at nothing but what toucheth the Senses: We cannot have Honour in the World; and 'tis this Honour of the World Concupiscence covets: Lastly, To arrive thereunto, we must be separated from those sensual Objects, and renounce Honours; which is what Concupiscence cannot suffer.

Concupiscence opposes the seeking and the Meditation of the Goods of the other Life, as it were the annihilating
its

its own. It spreads disgust upon all the Actions by which the Soul would incline thereto. It draws it low, when it should raise it self aloft, and by an horrible subversion represents this Source of all the true Good, and true Joy, under black, sad, and melancholy Idea's.

Those whose Hearts it possesseth, understand not likewise what is said thereof; the Fever of Iniquity has made them lose this Taste. *What will you have me to do to you, saith St. Austin to them, in Psal. 30. seeing that you cannot taste the true Goods, I am not able to make you comprehend them. Give me a Heart which may love them, and understand what I say. Give me a Heart to desire them, which may hunger after them; who sees it self in the Desert of this World, as out of its Country; who sighs with an ardent desire after this Fountain of our eternal Country: Give me, say I, a Man in this disposition, and he understands what I say; but if I speak to a cold and insensible Heart, it cannot tell what I say. Se frigido loquor nescit quod loquor.*

'Tis Concupiscence which spreads this cold and distaste over the Heart; and as it is more strong and lively in some than in others, it disperses it un-

equally, and in different degrees. It makes some entirely bent against Discourses and Thoughts of the other Life. It makes others tire themselves presently with it. It hinders others from applying themselves thereunto, furnishing them with other Objects.

Behold its Propensity and Inclination, and we need but sound a little our own Hearts, to acknowledge them in some degree in our selves: But it is good at first to consult the Lights of Reason, to learn in what manner we ought to consider this Malady, which with reason we have called the Natural and Universal Heresie of depraved Man, even then principally when it is so strong, that it stifles entire'y in us the desire of Heavenly Goods.

CHAP. III.

That'tis a Criminal Condition not to desire the Beatitude of the other Life.

WE consider very ordinarily the Beatitude which Faith promi-
seth to the Just, as a Good which should
be the principal Object of all Mens de-
sires ;

fires ; and we condemn, as an unanswerable Stupidity, the pronity they have to worldly things, which hinders them from thinking thereof. But we scarcely regard this desire of a happy Life as a disposition both essential and necessary to arrive thereat: nor the being deprived of this Desire, by an Inclination to this present Life, as a state of Sin which renders us Criminals. Few Persons examine themselves upon this Point, and we hardly see any who reviewing their former Lives, consider it as a great disorder, to have spent part thereof without desiring the other, and hating this.

Nevertheless, as there are some Actions which of themselves are mortal, and exclude those who commit them out of the Kingdom of Heaven ; there are also states and dispositions which of themselves are incompatible with this Kingdom.

Now betwixt these Dispositions, the Fathers have placed this, of finding themselves well in this World ; of contenting themselves with the Goods they enjoy therein, and of not desiring the happy Life which *Jesus Christ* promiseth them in the other Life.

'Tis St. *Austin* who did it expressly :
 'Tis, saith he, *after the heavenly Jerusalem we sigh, in considering our selves as it were Strangers and Captives under the foot and bondage of a mortal Body.* 'Tis *after this same Object we shall sigh in our Pilgrimage, by forbearing to rejoyce in our Native Country.* But he who laments not as a Stranger on Earth, shall not rejoyce as a Citizen in Jerusalem, because the desire of a happy Life is not in him. *Qui non gemit ut peregrinus, non gaudebit civis, quia desiderium non est in illo.* St. Aug. in Psal. 148.

This holy Doctor saith the same thing in another place, in a more short manner, in explicating these Words of the Apostle, *Infelix ego homo.* Let that man, saith he, in Psal. 146. *hope for felicity who acknowledgeth himself miserable in this World: Ille speret fœlicitatem qui confiteatur infœlicitatem.* That is to say, That he who doth not acknowledge himself miserable, ought not to hope for Felicity. And therefore he decides neatly elsewhere, That whosoever is happy in this World, or rather whosoever believes himself happy, and lets himself be transported by the sensual Pleasures he enjoys, by the temporal Goods he possesseth;
 and

and by the felicity wherewith he is environed, hath the voice of Ravens and not of Doves; because Ravens make a great noise with their Cries, whereas the Doves do nothing but sigh and lament: *Habet vocem: Corvi, vox Corvi clamosa est, non gemitunda.* St. Aug. in Joan. tr. 6.

'Tis by the same Principle he hath always considered the Love of this present Life, by which we would almost always remain as it were opposite to the Love of God. *That Man*, saith he, in Psal. 85. *to whom his Pilgrimage is sweet, loves not his Country.* And if our Country be sweet to us, it must necessarily be that our Pilgrimage is hard and troublesome.

But is the Love of God compatible with this deprivation from the desire of the other Life? *No*, saith St. *Austin*, in the place before-cited: And it is by this means he would have us try whether we belong to God, or no. *Do not consult the Flesh*, saith he, *consult the Spirit; interrogate thy Heart, and hearken what it answers. Give ear to Faith, Hope, Charity, which have begun to be in thee. If thou hadst received assurance of being always filled with temporal Goods, and that God should say, Behold thy share, but then shalt*

not see my Face; wouldst thou rejoyce at those Goods? Is there any one would be glad of this Share, and would say in his heart, Behold me in an abundance of temporat Goods, I esteem my self happy, I desire nothing at all more? That Man who should say so, hath not yet begun to love God, nor to sigh and lament as a Stranger on the Earth. *Nondum cepit esse amator Dei, nondum cepit suspirare tanquam peregrinus.*

If he who loves not God, is yet under the *Anathema* pronounced by St. Paul, 2 Cor. 16. 11. *Qui nos amat Dominum Jesum Christum, sit Anathema*: If he be not separated from the Children of the Devil, nor received into the number of those of God, seeing that according to St. Austin, in Epist. Joan. tr. 15. there is only the Love of God which distinguisheth betwixt the Children of God and the Children of the Devil: *Sola dilectis discernit inter filios Dei & inter filios Diaboli*: If he hath not received the Spirit of Adoption, which makes us Heirs; *Si filii & heredes*, Rom. 8. 17. And lastly, If he is in death, as St. John saith, 1 Joan. 3. 14. *Qui non diligit manet in morte*: Who can doubt that this deprivation from the desire of heavenly Beatitude, including
that

that of the Love of God, is not a Criminal Disposition?

Not to sigh as a Stranger, nor to love God, are two inseparable things, according to St. *Austin*: *Nondum coepit esse amator Dei; nondum coepit suspirare tanquam peregrinus.*

He who loves not God, does not sigh after Life everlasting; he who sighs not after Life everlasting, does not love God. Now he who loves not God, belongs not to the New Law, nor can he have a part in the Recompences thereof.

The first Effect of God's Spirit in us, being to make us pray, his first Effect is to make us lament and sigh: For the Prayers of the Holy Ghost are Sighs and Lamentations. He prays for us, saith St. *Paul*, by Sighs which cannot be related: *Postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus.* Now to sigh, we must find our selves ill where we are, and desire another State: So he who does not sigh and lament, prays not; and he who prays not, obtains nothing from God.

Prayer is therefore a Proof that the State we speak of is a State of Sin; and whoever finds himself in this condition when he is a dying, cannot expect the Kingdom of Heaven. For Prayer is a necessary

necessary Means to obtain this Kingdom, in respect of those who have the use of reason. 'Tis likewise a Duty to beg it, seeing it is one of the Demands of the *Father noster*. Now whoever does not desire it, does not ask it: For Prayer consists not in Speech, it consists in the Desire, and it is likewise nothing else but a holy Desire, according to St. *Augustin*. He that desires always, prays always; and he who desires not, never prays.

Thus those who have no desire of the life of Heaven, which is the Kingdom of God, not demanding this Kingdom, it is not strange they do not obtain it, seeing they do not vouchsafe to ask it.

Christian Hope being also absolutely necessary for Salvation, furnisheth yet another Proof of this Truth. For Hope includes the desire of what we hope for; seeing that as Desire is only a Love which enclines towards an absent Object, so likewise Hope is only a desire of this absent Object; which is looked upon as a thing which may be acquired. If to destroy Hope, be to take away the thought of obtaining what we desire, 'tis yet to destroy it more, to take away the Love and the Desire. It is then clear, that

that he who is content with this present Life, and who does not desire the Felicity of the other, hath not Christian Hope, and that thus he is not less out of a state of arriving at Salvation, than if he had no Faith.

In fine, This Doctrine is nothing else than what all Divines teach after St. *Austin*, That 'tis a mortal Sin to establish his last End in any Creature whatsoever. For it is very visible, that he who does not desire a happy Life, which consists in the possession of God, doth not establish his End therein; seeing it is by Love and by Desire that we establish it there, and not by an Action of the Understanding. It is necessary then that we establish it in the Enjoyment of some Creatures; we must love them as our last End, and as the Object of all our Desires. Now there is no question but this Disposition is criminal, and that it renders even the Affections criminal, which otherwise were not so. Therefore St. *Thomas* examining how these venial Sins can become mortal, decides expressly, That the venial Affections or Inclinations for Creatures become mortal as soon as we establish our End and our Sovereign Happiness therein: and it

it is clear that we establish it therein, when we desire nothing more; it being impossible, that Man can be without some principal End whereto he relates his Actions and himself.

CHAP. IV.

That most part of Christians are in this Disposition.

ALL the Principles whereof this Doctrine is a necessary Consequence, being acknowledged by all the World, there will be found doubtless very few who will dispute it: But I cannot tell whether there will be many who can perceive how many there are to whom it gives leave to mistrust their state and condition; and fear or judge even with reason, that they are in this Disposition incompatible with Salvation, as we have just now represented.

I speak not of those who are engaged in manifest Crimes; for those, in leaning to the Actions to which God hath fastned the exclusion of his Kingdom, do clearly make appear, that they prefer the Pleasures they take therein,

therein, before the possession of this same Kingdom which they banish ; and even their crimes consist in this preferring creatures before the possessing of God. I speak of those who in appearance lead a more orderly life, and to whom no actions visibly Criminal can be imputed, and I say there are many who have great reason to believe that they have not in their hearts this desire of a happy life, without which they cannot arrive at Heaven.

For example, Can we believe, that those who hardly so much as ever think thereof ; that harken only with distaste to what men say of it ; that have their minds busied with nothing but the thoughts of fortune, and being fixed in this World, can have a hearty desire for the other life, a dislike for this ?

Can it be imagined that those whose lives are only a chain and a circle of divertisement, and whose great business is to make their pleasures succeed one another, without any interruption save that which is necessary to refresh and recreate them, can pass their lives in this lamenting and sighing condition, without which, according to St. *Luslin*, there is no pretending to the joy of the Citizens of *Jerusalem* ? It

It is true, that trouble and disgust do not forbear to find them in the midst of their pleasures; but this disgust comes from the desire of the Goods of another nature. 'Tis a disgust which springs from the greatness of their cupidity, and not from their weakness. It happens because they are not yet content with the pleasures they enjoy, and because they would have still greater. 'Tis a disgust which comes from the ardency with which they covet earthly goods, and not from the desire nor the Idea of Heavenly goods, on which they do never think at all.

This sighing whereof we speak, is not a dislike of certain pleasures: 'Tis a dislike of all pleasures. It does not include a disdain for certain honours and certain grandeurs of this World, but a disdain for all Worldly honours and grandeurs. 'Tis a dislike which makes us believe our selves miserable, being separated from God, being out of our Country, being subject to sin, being every moment in danger of losing the happiness whereunto we aspire. What is it that afflicts the heart, saith *St. Austin*? 'Tis for that it is not with Jesus Christ, for that it is out of its Country.

'Tis

'Tis this made that holy Doctor say,
That this present life is a continual affliction for vertuous Men. If you behold your self therein, saith he, as a stranger, either you scarcely love your Country, or you must be afflicted there. For who would not be troubled that he is not with him he desires? From whence comes it that you do not resent this affliction? 'Tis for want of love; love the other life, and you will soon find bitterness in this, with what prosperity soever it may flatter you, or what delights soever it may be replenished with. Ama alteram vitam, & videbis quia ista vita tribulatio est, quacunque prosperitate fulgeat, quibuscunque deliciis abundet atque circumfloreat. Aug. in Ps. 131.

It is very true, that this affliction and this sighing does not exclude all sort of affection for Worldly things; but it includes nevertheless such a preference of Eternal life before Temporal, how happy soever we may think it, that we account as the greatest of miseries, the enjoyment of all earthly things, and the being eternally deprived of the sight of God.

But perchance we shall find this sighing and this desire more easily in poor folk than in rich; amongst the miseries, and the

the labours of this life, than amongst pleasures and divertisements : we should have doubtless cause to believe it, if it were sufficient to find sighs and tears ; for we find them in great abundance in the World, as we do miseries. But for all that, it is not enough to sigh and weep. We must sigh and weep, not because we are deprived of Earthly pleasures, but for being deprived of Heavenly pleasures. Covetousness hath its tears as well as Charity. *And there are many, saith St. Austin, in Ps. 136. who shed Babylonian tears, because they know only Babylonian joys. Multis flent flent Babylonia quia gaudent gaudiis Babylonis.*

Many may be found, saith this same St. in Tr. 6. in Joan. in Ps. 48. who sigh under the weights of the afflictions of the Earth, or because they have lost their Goods, or are forced to prison and chains, or cast down with sickness, or forced to submit to the artifices of their Enemies : But they do not sigh like Doves, because it is not the love of God, nor the Holy Ghost which makes them to sigh. Therefore you see that when these persons are delivered from these afflictions, they cast forth great cries, and make appear by their transports

sports they were Ravens and not Doves.

God does not distinguish the poor and the rich by the outward Goods: he distinguisheth them by their desires. 'Tis by their heart, *saith St. Austin*, he examines them, not by their Chests and Houses, in *Pf. 51. Divites & pauperes in corde interrogat Deus, non in Arca & Domo.* What doth it avail you, *saith he* again, for that you are void of earthly goods, if you burn with a desire to have them? *Quid tibi prodest quod eges facultate, si ardes cupiditate?* He makes the same distinction of sighs and tears, and he placeth in the rank of those who have their consolation upon earth, those who weep and sigh that they have it not; those who thirst not after justice, but after Wordly goods, and who hate this life only because it is not permitted them to enjoy it as they would.

And 'tis this which gives leave to conclude, that this sighing is not less rare amongst the poor and miserable, than amongst the rich and happy; because if we see more miseries there, we see not less concupiscence; they think no more of the other life; and they are not less filled with the desire of the goods of this.

If we will know whether there be many who desire sincerely life everlasting, 'tis but examining whether there be many we can say who lay up their treasure in Heaven, seeing that, according to the Evangelist, Mans heart is where his treasure is. Note, It is certain, according to the same Evangelist, that we have not our treasure in Heaven, but when we treasure it in Heaven, and not up the Earth; that is, when we heap up good works, which we send before us to nourish us in eternity, when we transport what we can of our goods thither, as those do who would establish themselves in another Country by leaving their own. 'Tis for this reason we may acknowledge what is the place we look upon as our Country, or rather, 'tis this makes us see there are few who look upon Heaven as their Country, seeing there are very few who transport their goods thither, or make there a treasure of good works; but that, on the contrary, we see that all the cares and all the actions of the commonalty of the World tend only to the Earth, and are only for the Earth.

To desire life everlasting, is to desire Justice, is to be in a thirst after it. For
life

life everlasting will consist in the possession of perfect Justice. Now I know not whether, considering the life of the commonalty of the World, and seeing how little we are concerned at our faults, how little care we have of avoiding them, how little we dream of advancing ourselves in piety, it may very well be believed, there are many who be in this thirst and desire of Justice.

All this shews that we have no greater interest than to make this desire of the felicity of Heaven spring up in us, and this sighing for our exile, if we have them not, and to nonrish them if we have them. But as these sentiments have two considerations; one towards this present life, which is a consideration of disdain and aversion; the other towards the life of Heaven, which is a consideration of Love and Desire; it is clear, that to excite them it is necessary to know the miseries of this present life, and the incomprehensible goods of the other very well, which is what we shall endeavour to represent in the sequel of this Book.

CHAP. V.

Of the Exterior miseries of this life.

THE heighth of misery, saith St. *Austin*, is to be miserable and not to be concerned for it. *Quid miserius misero non miserante seipsum?* Nevertheless this heighth of misery makes the common state of Men, and nothing almost happens more generally to them, than to be absolutely cast down with, and insensible of those evils which overwhelm them.

This insensibility happens not in them from the disdain they have for the miseries of this life; but by their blindness, and the being carried away by their passions. For see here in what manner they procure to themselves the rest and joy they seem sometimes to possess. First, in respect of past Evils, they think no more of them. They esteem as nothing all future Evils, and without all those solid reasons Philosophers have endeavoured to furnish them with, they deliver themselves from the fear they may have of them, either through rash hopes, or simply by not thinking at all on them.

They

They know not the greatest part of their spiritual Evils, and they make very few Reflexions upon those they do know. Their self-love dissipates from their sight most of those Objects which should make any Impression upon their Minds: And by this means they become capable of applying themselves to some of the Objects of their Passions, which they see but by halves, and whose dismal Consequences they do not at all consider: And this is what Men call Pleasures, and the Joys of this World.

With all these miserable Consolations which their Blindness or their Passions procure them, they cease not to be often dejected by Sadness and Melancholy; because there are infinite of Evils in this Life, which they cannot avoid seeing and feeling; but there is this difference betwixt their Goods and Evils, that their Goods appear such only by a mistake of their Imagination, and their Evils have commonly more reality than they are aware of.

If this Ignorance wherein they are, of the most part of their Miseries, had no bad Effects, perhaps we should be tempted to look upon it as a kind of Good; but there lacks a great deal of that coming

coming to pass. This false Idea they have of the Goods and Evils of this life, entertains their affections. nourisheth their passions, and hinders them from thinking of themselves. And thus nothing is of more importance than to be undeceived, and not to palliate the real and effective Miseries of humane life.

It would be an endless discourse to pretend to represent here all these miseries, we must be content to trace out a small pourtraiture of them. We shall chiefly borrow it of St. *Austin*, who having been much taken up with this Object, has made divers pictures thereof in his works.

He begins it ordinarily with the state of Children; Behold, saith he, Children, and consider with how many Evils they are overwhelmed. Amongst how many Vanities, Errors, and Frights they are educated. Aug. cont. Julian, l. 4. c. ult. *Intuere parvulos quot & quanta mala patientur, in quibus vanitatibus, erroribus, terroribus crescant.* Although we may be accustomed to observe their state without horror, as imagining they will come out thereof, however it is such that there is no Man who is discreet and

and wise who had not rather die than be reduced to this Weakness, Ignorance, and Imbecillity of Mind and Body as is seen in Children. *Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. 21. c. 24.* Thus we begin our whole life in a state which we judge worse than death, and this so wretched state compleats a great part of this life.

'Tis true, that Reason unfolding it self by little and little, we forget some of our Childish weakneses by means of instruction. But that, saith St. *Austin, De. Civit Dei. l. 28. c. 12.* is not done without a great deal of care and pains. How necessary are threats and chastisements to keep Children within their limits, and to fit them for something that's useful? And how seldom it prospers, in regard of the greatest number, notwithstanding all these chastisements? The torrent of natural corruption carries away the most part of them, and the obscurity and dulness of Mind hinders others from comprehending what we would gladly shew them. 'Tis a misery to remain in Ignorance and Brutality, which we bring with us from our Birth; and 'tis another misery to free our selves from them by such painful and laborious means. L The

The only advantage Children have, is, that they are Miserable without knowing it, or without discerning their Evils, if that may be called advantage; but this is taken away by the encrease of Age, which giving them a more distinct sentiment of their inclinations, renders them also more miserable; as being always deprived of some part of what they desire.

We would not die, nor have any pain of Body or Mind; we desire not to be deceived; *Non mori, non offendi, non falli*; yet we are every hour exposed to death, to griefs, and to errors.

Who can, *saith St. Austin*, I do not say express, but comprehend all the Miseries whereunto Men are subject, and which are consequences of their Miserable conditions? What apprehension and what grief does the death of Neighbours, the loss of Goods, condemnations, treacheries, false suspicions, violences, which we suffer, as Robbing, Captivity, Fetters, Imprisonment, Banishment, Tortures, loss of Limbs, Infamies and Brutalities, and a thousand other horrible things, cause in us, which very often happen? Who can rely upon his innocence to be free from

from the insults of the Devils, seeing that sometimes they torment Children so cruelly who are newly Baptised; God, who permits it, teaching us thereby to deplore the misery of this life, and to desire the felicity of the other? What shall I say of the Sickneses which are in such great numbers, that even Physical Books cannot contain them all? And the most part of remedies which are administred to heal and cure them, are so many torments, so that a Man cannot be cured of one grief but by another.

The ordinary state and condition of Mankind is nothing but a continual Sicknes, which hath need of remedies, and these remedies are other kind of Diseases, which afterwards we must endeavour to cure. Hunger and Thirst would kill us, if we did not put a stop thereto by nourishments and drinks. We become weary if we stand long, and we are refreshed by sitting down; but this remedy begins presently to be troublesome to us, and we cannot sit any long time. We are weary with Watching, Standing, Walking, Sitting, Eating, and which way soever we turn our selves to take some rest, we find

there weariness and trouble. *Quidquid nobis providerimus ad refectiorem, illic rursus invenimus defectionem.*

'Tis true, that all these Evils may serve as exercise to Virtue, but if Virtue can make good use of them, and can suffer them, nevertheless it cannot love the Evils it suffers, nor ought not to love them. For that is not the natural state of Man; 'tis a consequence of sin, and as we must desire the destruction of it, we must also wish and desire that of its consequences. 'Tis a state of War, which permits us to enjoy no Peace: Yet it is just to incline to the first order, and to this peace which sin hath disquieted. The state of War can be neither Natural nor Eternal, for every thing tends to Peace. In a word, it is lawful and conform to the order of God, and his Eternal Law to desire to enjoy it without any trouble or disturbance of Body or Mind, seeing 'tis what he has designed Man for, and that he must be Miserable out of this order, in which and for which he hath created him.

CHAP. VI.

*The Image of Mans inward Miseries in
this life.*

BUT all outward Evils, whereof Man is continually a mark in this World, compose only a small part of the Miseries of this life. Those which afflict his Mind, ought to have infinitely more power to make him hate it. Although there should be only this horrible uncertainty of the grace or the hatred of God, doubtfulness of our Salvation or of utter loss, wherein we must absolutely pass this life; should it not be sufficient to fill it with bitterness? What Criminal was ever pleased in a Prison, wherein he was confin'd, and there to expect a Sentence which ought to decide either his death or his life?

Now if we open our Eyes to see these continual dangers wherein we are of being lost Eternally, the precipices which environ us, the snares which our ways are full of, the malice, force, and the tricks of our Enemies, our weakness and want of light; must we

not be stupified not only to believe our selves happy in this state, but also not to esteem our selves most miserable?

It is true, that the grace and light of God might be our defence against all these dangers, and a support to our weakness against such terrible Enemies: *But alas! what do we do to deserve it? What are our Prayers which ought to gain it? What weight or charge does not the Soul experience, when she would raise her self up to God? How much doth this mortal and depraved body cause her of trouble and obstacles, which call her to the Earth and withdraw her from God? What innumerable crouds of Phantomes and Tentations come to molest and disturb her? and does she not feel in her self as it were a multitude of Worms gnawing her, which spring from the bottom of her corruptions?* Aug. in Ps. 102.

What Misery to be Master neither of Mind nor Body, and to see the one busied with a thousand ridiculous and disorderly thoughts, and the other agitated with an infinite of evil desires and corrupted sentiments, and not able to stop this miserable crowd! to be obliged to live with this throng of interior Enemies, always at variance with them,
and

and never able to exterminate them!

To cast our selves away, there needs nothing but that we deliver up our selves to them, and that we give over opposing them; and we cannot warrant our selves, but by continual resisting. "It behoves us, saith St. *Austin, de Civit. Dei, lib. 22. cap. 23.* to watch continually, for fear lest a false appearance deceive us, lest an artificial Discourse surprize us, lest some Error make it self Master of our Minds, lest we take Good for Bad, or Bad for Good, lest Fear dissuade us from doing our Duties, lest Passion precipitate us to do what we should not do, lest the Sun go down upon our Wrath, lest Hatred sway us to render Evil for Good, lest excessive Sadness deject us, lest we be unthankful for a good turn done, lest evil Sayings trouble us, lest we commit rash Judgments, lest these which are made of us do molest us, lest Sin reign in our mortal Bodies, by inclining us to second its desires, lest we make our Members serve as Instruments of Iniquity to Sin, lest the Eyes follow their disorderly Appetites, lest a desire of Revenge oversway and provoke us, lest we fix our Looks and

“Thoughts upon unlawful Objects, lest
 “we take delight in hearing some in-
 “jurious or dishonest talk, lest in this
 “War, so painful and so full of dangers,
 “we do promise our selves the victory
 “by our proper forces, or attribute
 “it to our selves, in lieu of attri-
 “buting it to the favour of him of
 “whom the *Apostle* saith, Thanks be
 “given to God who gives us victory,
 “through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who can deny that 'tis not a great
 Misery to be thus devided and torn in
 our selves, and obliged to this conti-
 nual combate. *The Spirit carries us a-*
loft, says the same St. Austin, the
weight of the flesh forceth us downwards. So
in these two different strifes, whereof one
elevates us, and the other humbles us,
there is a continual War in us, and this
War is properly the Affliction and Misery
of this life. Spiritum rursum vocat, pondus
carnis deorsum revocat. Inter duos conatus
suspensionis & ponderis colluctatio quadam
est, & ipsa colluctatio pressura nostra est.

Behold the condition of this life, but
 how troublesom is it? How many vi-
 sible and invisible wounds receive we
 thereby? How much reason have we to
 fear the event of it, seeing there-
 needs

needs but one single fight, and one single consent to destroy us?

Likewise we cannot regard with certainty the favours which we have received of God, and the good works which they have done us. We spoil them, we sully them, and we lose them often, in fixing our Eyes stedfastly thereon, as well as in exposing them to others. And how troublesom soever the Spectacle of these our Evils and Defects may be for us, it is yet less to be feared than that of our good and our virtue.

What if in diverting our Minds a little with our inward Miseries, we pretend to comfort our selves by the commerce of Creatures, and by a prospect of what passeth in the World? we shall not find therein any thing but occasions of hating this life. For what do we discover therein but interest, injustice, violent passions, oppressions of truth and justice, blindness, errors, preventions, wiles, disguisements, and vanity? Wherein is reason harkened unto? Where are Men guided by true interest?

Not only, as the Prophet saith, there is no truth, mercy, nor knowledge of

God upon Earth, *that is to say*, in the World: But the small number of People who have the Mercy, Truth, and Justice of God in their heart, know not how to practice it in respect of People of the World. We know not how we ought to receive them, nor what we ought to say to them. We must fear angering and hurting them, instead of assisting them, we must likewise fear wanting the Charity which is due to them. This double fear keepeth the Mind in a continual agitation and uncertainty, and what precaution soever we apply, oftentimes we cannot avoid seeing our selves engaged with them in Wicked contestations.

“ It is a hard thing, Brethren, *saith St.*

“ *Austin, in Joan. 17. 35.* to be at quiet with

“ all the World, and to contest with no

“ Man. God calls us to an agreement, he

“ commands us to be peaceable. 'Tis the

“ mark we ought to aim at, and we ought

“ to use all our indeavours to arrive at

“ perfect peace. Nevertheless it happens

“ often that we fall into dispute with

“ those we would serve. A Man is in

“ an error, you desire to lead him back

“ into the way of life, he resists you

“ with a sharp wit. 'Tis thus the Pa-

gans

"gans and Hereticks resist those who
 "oppose the Errors and Doctrines of the
 "Devil, whereunto they cleave so fast.
 "A bad Catholick will not live well,
 "and you are obliged to reprove him
 "though he be in the bosom of the
 "Church. What troubles have we not
 "to seek out ways to correct him, to
 "be able to give a favourable account
 "of him to a common Master? Have
 "many see we spring thus in all parts
 "from the occasions of contests and
 "disputes? It happens often then that
 "being cast down with trouble, we say
 "within our selves, What have I to do
 "to suffer so many contradictions on
 "the behalf of those who return me
 "bad for good? I will procure their
 "happiness, and they will lose them-
 "selves. I consume my life in contest-
 "ing, I have no Peace nor Quiet, I do
 "nothing but procure my self Enemies,
 "of those who should have an affection
 "for me, if they did consider that
 "which I have for them; why do we
 "always continue in these troubles and
 "sufferings? Were it not better to
 "busie our selves about our own oc-
 "casions, to rob our selves of all, and
 "to be content in praying to God? But
 that

“ shut up your self in your self as much
 “ as you will, if you have begun to fol-
 “ low God, you will find a contra-
 “ diction there; and what contradicti-
 “ on? The Flesh strives against the Spi-
 “ rit, and the Spirit against the Flesh.

If it be a difficult thing to serve Men, it is no less to defend our selves from them. For there is nothing in the World which may not be contagi-ous, its Maxims, Spirit, Passions are communicated insensibly to those who live therein. We find our selves, without thinking thereof, covered with its dust, and we lose truth in the obscurity it causeth.

The sight of a Person absolutely Worldly imprints I know not what Evils in the Soul of a good Man. For there is as it were a hidden Air in the Minds of all Wicked Men, which communicates it self more insensibly into Souls which have some commerce with them, than the Air of Bodies infected with the Plague doth communicate it self to those who approach it. *Letter of M. de S. Ceram tom. 1. l. 56. See tom. 2. Letter. 2.*

Those who have known the World very well, represent it to us as a great
 Fire.

Fire, or rather as a source of Fires made of the tripple concupiscence which reigns there, whose flames spreading themselves over all parts, do devour Souls by the boisterousness of the Fire which issues out. These boisterous storms enter by the Eyes and the Ears into the Substance of the Soul, and makes her lose the life of the Spirit, in leaving her that of the Body, and they enter in divers and sundry manners, according to the several passions they excite in the heart. Sometimes they poison it by a mortal sweetness, sometimes they cast it down by a criminal timidity, sometimes they exasperate it by hatred and wrath. For all is dangerous in the World; its friendship as well as its hatred, its carresses as well as its persecutions. All this serves to tempt the Soul, and often occasions scandal and a relapse.

If the World wherein the Devil reigns were separated by some sensible marks from that where he reigns not, perhaps we might take some Measures to guide our selves therein surely. But it is not so: All is covered with darkness in this Life: The good and bad are not only mingled, but confounded there: They
are:

are only distinguished by the bottom of the Heart, which is not seen, and where of it is not permitted to judge. Thus by thinking to be united to honest Men, and to find amongst them true Friends, we many times find our selves united to wicked and envious Men, and indeed Enemies.

To become such, they need only discover sharp and wicked Passions against us, it sufficeth that they have Intentions contrary to ours. "Who, saith St. Au-
 "stin, can doubt, but that they are our
 "Enemies, seeing they have a design to
 "render us Companions of their Punish-
 "ments? And 'tis a great thing, adds he,
 "to be struck every day with their Di-
 "scourges, and not go aside from the
 "way of God. For the Soul often wil-
 "ling to go to God, is seized with fear,
 "and staggers in the way; she dares not
 "accomplish her Desires which are
 "good, for fear of shocking those with
 "whom she lives, who love and seek
 "transitory and perishable Goods. *Et*
magnum est inter eorum verba versari quo-
tidie & non exidere de itinere praeceptorum
Dei. Sepe enim mens tutens pergere in
Deum, concussa in ipso itinere trepidat, &
plerumque propterea non implet bonum pro-
positum,

positum, ne offendat eos cum quibus vivat, alia bona peritura & transeuntia diligentes.

Nevertheless we must grant, that there is some consolation in the obligation or strict alliance we may have with vertuous Men; and 'twas the only one St. *Austin* found in this Life. But with how many Bitternesses is this Consolation mingled? Even when we have the most reason to be satisfied with them, they only then render us most miserable; all their Evils becoming common to us. So Humane Friendship of it self is only an extension of our Miseries, because we are exposed thereunto not only in our proper Persons, but also in that of our Friends. 'Tis a multiplication of Fears, Sadnesses, and Melancholy. But what is more troublefom, is, That as those with whom we contract these strict Ties are Men, we are often deceived by them, and we often discover in them afterwards some incommodious Defects, which we scarcely expected. What care soever we apply, not to shock them, we see them oftentimes wax cold towards us upon these Suspensions, these Reports, and these ill-grounded Imaginations. They let themselves be tired sometimes with us, through a pure Inconstancy, or by new Passions wherein

wherein they are engaged. If we be reserved towards them, they complin ; if we be too free, they abuse it. It sufficeth them often to have an aversion for us, to believe that we have no esteem for them. So after a Familiarity of many years, we find our selves many times less united, than if we had never seen them. And there are few Contracts among Men which are not terminated, and which are not reduced at last to meer simple Civilities by this means, without any true Union.

Where can we find Persons who concern themselves seriously about our Salvation ; who insinuate themselves into our Spiritual and Temporal Occasions ; who dream of preventing what may hurt us, and to uphold us in our Weaknesses ? Every one thinks of himself in this World, and is as it were quite separated from others. We see almost no where any true Union ; and we see but too much amongst Christians the accomplishment of the Threat which *Jeremiah* made to the *Jews*, c. 9. v. 4. *That every brother should set snares for his brother, and that every friend should use deceit and artifice: Quia omnis frater supplantans supplantabit, & omnis amicus fraudulen-*
ter

Enter incedit: And that they should render *Jerusalem* as a heap of sand, *Jer. 9. 12.* *Et dabo Jerusalem in acervos arena.* For the Church indeed is almost composed of nothing but a heap of Sand, that is to say, of dry Members, which are not united together by an interior Union of Gods Spirit, but by an exterior Composition, forming a kind of Society which edifies little, and which is ready to be disunited at every blast of Wind.

What is yet stranger, is, That this disunion hath not only place in the great Society of the Church, because of the Wicked who fill it, but we observe it in almost all particular Societies, and even in that of the most Religious Men. All there is filled with interior Divisions of Mind and of Sentiments, and exterior Peace is conserved thereby only because every one hides himself, husbands himself, and dissembles his Thoughts from others.

In fine, Although we have found Friends exempt from all faults, we ought always to fear lest they change, saith St. *Austin*, in *Psal. 85.* as we ought to fear our selves. Thus as wicked mens malice is a continual cause of grief, the uncertainty of good mens perseverance
is

is a continual cause of uneasiness. Who will be astonish'd after that that St. *Au-*
stin maintains, That pious men are al-
 ways afflicted in this life, and that we
 need only to walk in the way of God to
 be persecuted? *Ambulez per viam Angu-*
stam & incipiat pie vivere in Christo, &
necesse est ut persecutionem patiatur; since
 that being afflicted as they are with the
 disorders and scandals of the World,
 and the instability of good men, these
 kind of Persecutions can never be want-
 ing to them.

'Tis true, there are very few who re-
 sent these Pains in this nature; and the
 Wicked, who make up the greatest num-
 ber, are no ways moved thereat. But
 they are so far from being happy there-
 by, 'tis that which on the contrary cau-
 ses the height of their misery. For this
 insensibility comes from the blindness of
 the Understanding, and the obdurate-
 ness of the Heart. They are all covered
 with horrible and mortal Wounds; they
 are deprived of all true Good; they
 are the Object of God's Wrath; they
 are the Pastime of the Devils, who do-
 mineer over them, who move them, who
 lead them into Hell, and they neither
 see nor perceive any thing thereof.

Although

Although they should enjoy with that all Earthly Goods, and be exempt from all Evils of this Life, they should nevertheless be very miserable, and their false Felicity ought to pass for nothing but a true Misery. *Falsa felicitas vera miseria*, saith St. *Austin*, in *Psal.* 85. But often also they are not temporally happy: God's Justice does not cease to make them feel it, and to trouble their miserable Pleasures. The World hath its Bitternesses for them, as well as for virtuous Men. They are no more exempt from Losses than others, from Maladies, and Sickneses, and other Accidents, to which Men are exposed; and they are so much more sensible thereof, by how much more they love the Goods which are forced from them by these Accidents. They are pure Evils for them, as finding nothing in them whereby they can receive any comfort. They can neither go out of themselves, because they find nothing but Afflictions; nor enter into themselves, because they find nothing that's Good. *Non est quo exeat quia dura sunt, non est quo intret quia mala sunt.* Even when they shall not have outwardly any cause of Affliction, their Passions make Troubles arise within them, which permit

mit them not to enjoy any true repose. Thus although it may be generally true of all Men, as well good as bad, that 'tis impossible in this Life to be free from Fear, Labour, Grief, and Danger; this nevertheless is principally true of the Wicked: They are incapable of Rest, of Peace, and Joy; and their Lives are so much more miserable, and so much more to be complained of, by how much less they know their Miseries, and are concerned for them; *santo magis flenda, quanto minus fletur.*

CHAP. VII.

The first manner of conceiving Heavenly Felicity, by the exemption from the Evils of this Life.

THE Prospect we have of the Miseries of this Life, ought not only to free us from and make us hate them; it ought also to be to us as a Rule to raise us to the knowledge of the Heavenly Life, seeing that the exemption from these Miseries makes up a part of the Happiness which we expect. And therefore the Scripture often represents it to
us

us under this Idea. It makes us consider, that thereby we are delivered from the necessity of Death, and from all occasions of Tears which we have in this World. God, saith *Isaiah*, cap. 25. v. 8. *will destroy death for ever, and our Lord God will dry up the tears of all eyes, and will blot out from the face of the earth the reproach of his People; for 'tis our Lord who hath spoken: It promiseth an absolute deliverance from all our Enemies, that is to say, from the Devils, from the Wicked, from our Passions; and from our Sins. You shall hear speak no more,* saith the same Prophet, cap. 60. ver. 8. *of violence in your Land, nor of destruction and oppression; salvation shall environ your walls, and praises shall ring at your doors.* It makes us hope for an exemption from all Necessities which spring from our Mortality, and which render the Souls dull and heavy. *They shall have no more,* saith he, *hunger nor thirst, heat nor the Sun shall not burn them, because he who is full of mercy for them shall conduct them, and lead them to drink at the fountain head. Your Sun shall set no more, and your Moon shall suffer no more decrease; because our Lord will be your eternal torch, and the days of your tears shall be finished.*

'Tis

'Tis upon this Model St. *Austin*, in divers places of his Works, makes the exemption from Miseries and Necessities of this present Life appear in the portraiture of Beatitude, whereof he endeavours to imprint a Love and Desire in Christians. "We shall, *saieth he, de Symb. ad Catech. lib. 2. cap. 22.* have no more need of Clothes in this most happy Life, seeing we shall there be clothed with Immortality; we shall not want Food, seeing our Souls shall there be satisfied with the presence of the Bread of Life, which is descended from Heaven for our Salvation; we shall have wherewith to quench our thirst, being we shall be neer unto the Fountain of Life. There we shall be free from Heat, because we shall find our Refreshment under the Wings of him who will protect us for all Eternity. There we shall suffer no Cold, being we shall there have a Sun which will warm our Hearts by the heat of his Love. There we shall never be weary, because we shall have him with us who is our Strength. There will be no Traffick, no Slavery, no troublesom nor laborious Works.

"Wherefore,

“Wherefore, *saieth he, in another place,*
 “is Man renewed again? ’Tis to desire
 “heavenly and eternal things, and to
 “sigh after this divine Country, where
 “we may enjoy a full Security, where we
 “no more shall lose our Friends,
 “where we shall fear no Enemies, where
 “we shall be filled with holy affections,
 “where we shall be without care for
 “any thing, where no Man is born,
 “because no Man dies there, where
 “goods grow no more, because they
 “receive there no dimunition; where
 “we have neither hunger nor thirst,
 “but where we shall be filled with
 “immortality and nourished with truth
 “it self.

After he hath represented in his Sermon upon the 84. *Psalm*, That there is no peace in the World, that we must be there always at strife with the Devils, with our concupiscences, with tentations, with evil thoughts and desires, with hunger and thirst, with weariness and sleep, having shewn that the comforts and miseries which spring from our mortality, will become mortal by their continuation, that to die ’tis sufficient continually to eat, to fast, to sit, to walk, to watch, and to sleep; that
 so

so we may not hope for peace, but *Death shall be swallowed up by our Victory*, which will give us eternal rest, he cries out, " O Brethren, we shall be
" in a certain City, of which I would
" never cease speaking, principally
" when scandales are augmented. Who
" would not wish for this place of
" peace, from whence no Friend will
" ever depart, and whereinto no Ene-
" my shall be able to find entrance;
" where there be no more tempters, no
" more seditious Men, nor none who
" divide the People of God, no more
" Diabollicall Ministers who tire and
" trouble the Church of God, being
" that the Prince himself shall have been
" cast into everlasting Fire, with all
" those who follow his designs, and
" are not separated from him? 'Twill be
" then there will be a perfect peace for
" all Gods Children, because they shall
" love each other perfectly, seeing them-
" selves replenisht with God: when God
" shall be all in all, when she shall be
" the common spectacle, the common
" possession, the common peace of all
" his Elect, and that he himself shall be
" all things to us.

'Tis

'Tis through the difference there is
betwixt an Earthly and Heavenly life,
that he delivers this in another place
of the same work. *In Ps. 49.* "We do,
"saith he, good Works in this life, in
"giving Bread to those who want, re-
"ceiving Strangers into our Houses,
"*&c.* but all that, is it not mingled
"with misery and affliction? For we
"cannot practice mercy, if there be
"no miserable People; then seeing
"there must be miserable People to ex-
"ercise it, is it not a quite contrary
"happines to be in a place, where none
"needs assistance, because none have
"need of nourishment? where there are
"no Strangers to be lodged in their
"Houses, no Naked to Cloath, no Sick
"to visit, no Quarrels to compose?
"where all is perfect, all in health, all
"is true, all eternal? where Justice will
"be our bread, Wisdom our drink,
"Immortallity our cloathing? where
"we shall have Heaven for our eternal
"House? where weariness shall not
"make us yield to sleep? where there
"will be no more death, no more di-
"visions, but where we shall enjoy ever-
"lasting peace and quiet, and joy and
"justice?

This makes him conclude, That there is nothing but Poverty in this World, Sickness, Infirmities, Weakness, Imperfection, Necessity, and that true Health and perfect Justice are only in Heaven.

“ In this holy City, there will be
 “ true riches, because there we shall
 “ want nothing, and effectively we shall
 “ need nothing. There we shall have
 “ perfect health, because death shall be
 “ destroyed there, and this Corruptible
 “ body shall be cloathed again with In-
 “ corruptibility. There we shall have
 “ true justice, because there we cannot do
 “ any bad or Wicked action, and we
 “ shall be also incapable of having any
 “ evil thoughts. *Aug. in Ps. 122.*

If the Saints proposed to themselves these objects without fear of altering the purity of their love; who ought to scruple proposing them to themselves? and who ought not to acknowledge that 'tis a great fault to be so little entertained with these thoughts, and to sigh so little after this happy state, so different from ours, where we shall enjoy an unalterable peace, no Enemies to contend with; where we shall be troubled no more with either inward or outward temptation; where the Body shall contend

contend no more against the Spirit; the Soul shall be no more pressed down by the weight and the inclinations of the flesh; the Spirit no more troubled nor busied with cares, inquietudes, or with vain and unprofitable thoughts; the Heart shall be no more separated and torn by so many different desires; where there shall be no more scandals, infidelities, artifices, suspicions; where we shall no more see things in this thick cloud, which discovers only to us as it were a confused shadow of truth; and lastly, where God shall reign absolutely over us, and shall be the perpetual object of our knowledge and love?

CHAP. VIII.

That we ought not to form to our selves the Idea of a Carnal Beatitude.

ALthough the holy Fathers have approved that Christians should comprehend the deliverance from the Evils of this present life by the Sovereign happiness which is promised us in Heaven, and that they themselves have given us the example to desire this perfect peace, which shall not be troubled

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with any disquiet, nor any grief, and which shall place the Soul in a full and entire joy; yet they have found that we may abuse these words, and take occasion from thence to frame an Idea of a felicity quite carnal, by not proposing to our selves other Goods in the other life, than those we may enjoy in *this*, as riches, honours, Magnificent shews, quietness of the Mind, and lastly, pleasures which spring from self-love.

Therefore they have had a care to destroy these false Ideas, to enable us to form true ones.

“Worldly Men, *saieth St. Austin, in*
 “*Pf. 86.* are all transported by their
 “pleasures and divertisements. Never-
 “theless our Lord God lets us know that
 “the Wicked are incapable of joy. ’Tis
 “because there is another pleasure and
 “another joy, which the Eye hath not
 “seen, which the Ear has not heard,
 “and which the Wit of Man can never
 “conceive. ’Tis the joy of those who
 “dwell with thee, O my God. Let us
 “prepare our selves for this joy, of
 “which we may find some footsteps in
 “the World, but which are far short
 “of truth. Let us be very careful not
 “to propose to our selves pleasures
 like

"like to those we taste upon Earth;
 "otherwise all the mitigation whereby
 "we abstain from Worldly pleasures,
 "would only be a kind of avarice.
 "There are some Persons who fast on-
 "ly to prepare themselves for better
 "chear. Fasting is a great thing, the
 "intention of it is to moderate concu-
 "piscence; and yet sometimes we make
 "use of it to satisfy our inordinate
 "desires. If you believe then, Brethren,
 "that in this Country, whereunto we
 "are called by the Heavenly Trumpet,
 "we ought to have pleasures like those
 "of this World, and that now we ab-
 "stain from them only to enjoy them
 "more plentifully in the other life, you
 "resemble those who fast to dispose
 "themselves for a great feast, and who
 "are temperate through a greater in-
 "temperance. Banish from your
 "thoughts these base and carnal imagi-
 "nations, prepare your self for some
 "ineffable thing, purifie your heart
 "from all terrestrial and secular affecti-
 "ons. We shall see an object which,
 "will render us happy, and this single
 "object will suffice us.

"We shall be replenisht with the
 "Goods of your House, *said he, in*
 M 3 *another*

"another place, In Ps. 64. But what
 "are the goods of this House? shall we
 "imagine, Brethren, a magnificent Pa-
 "lace, filled with all sorts of riches,
 "Gold and Silver Vessels, Officers,
 "Horses, and shall we fancy to our
 "selves Pictures, Marble, Wainscoting,
 "Columns, and rich Apartments? There
 "are some who love these things, but
 "these things belong to *Babylon*. Lay
 "off all these desires, O ye Citizens of
 "*Jerusalem*, and if you will return to
 "your Country, do not place your joy
 "in your Banishment and Exile, covet
 "the House of God, covet the Goods
 "of this House, but do not covet the like
 "to those which you might have seen and
 "which you may desire to have for your
 "House here upon Earth, either for
 "your Neighbour, or for your Friend.
 "The Goods of the House of God are
 "not of this Nature. *We shall be replenish'd,*
saith the Prophet, with the Goods of your
House, your Temple is Holy, it is wonder-
ful in Justice. "Behold the Goods of
 "this House! He does not say that this
 "Temple is admirable in Columns, in
 "Marble, in Wainscoting; but that 'tis
 "admirable in Justice. You have exte-
 "riour Eyes to see Gold and Marble,
 but

“ but the Eye by which we see Beauty
“ and Justice is interior.

We must not therefore deceive ourselves, nor stretch forth concupiscence even to Heaven, by desiring there the enjoyment of it. God will only be the portion of his Elect. He alone will complete their felicity. Their only joy shall be to see him, love him, to be subject to him, to see him rule over them, and to have nothing in them opposite to his Justice. See here what the ground of their happiness will be, they will not consider all the rest, but in relation to this essential good.

CHAP. IX.

A larger explication of the Essential Beatitude of the Saints.

TIS a very strange thing that we must be obliged to prove to Men that the sight and love of God are capable to make them happy. For 'tis like proving to them that the light is able to illuminate them; since that God being essentially the Sovereign good, produceth also by his possession

M 4

necessarily

necessarily perfect happiness, as light necessarily chaseth away darkness. However, it is true, that although Christians have no need of reasons and proofs, to believe in general that heir happiness consists in seeing and loving God, they have need thereof to be made concerned for this truth. The lively Idea they have of sensual pleasures, makes them be but little sensible of Spiritual ones; they are troubled to conceive how we may be happy by a sight and love which shall have nothing that's sensible.

'Tis then necessary to assist them in this point, to guide them as it were by degrees to the knowledge of true felicity, and see here how *St. Austin* does it ordinarily. There are very few amongst those who have any love for piety, who may not sometimes be touched with sensible affection for persons in whom they have seen great and eminent virtues: And as it is not the shape of these Persons they love, nor their natural Wit, it is evident that what they like in them, is the excellency of their Justice and Charity, and Virtue. "If Justice, saith *St. Austin*, in *Pf. 64*. "had no beauty, how could a just and "virtuous old Man be beloved? What presents

“ presents he to our Eyes that can be
“ pleasing? Crooked members, a
“ Wrinkled Forehead, an universal weak-
“ ness? But perhaps being incapable to
“ please the Eyes, he has wherewith to
“ satisfy the Ears. By what words, by
“ what charm is he able to do it? Al-
“ though he might have had a voice in
“ his younger days, Age may have rob-
“ ed him of it; scarcely can he be heard,
“ so that he is far from being able to
“ please in speaking. Nevertheless if
“ this old Man be just, if he do not
“ desire other mens Goods, if he give
“ wise counsel, if he have a right judg-
“ ment of things, and if he be ready
“ to deliver his body broken as it is, for
“ the truth, as many Martyrs have done.
“ in this age, we cease not to love him;
“ and as we shall discover in him nothing
“ that’s Beautiful to the Eyes of the flesh,
“ we ought to conclude from thence, that
“ there is a certain Beauty of Justice,
“ which is seen with the Eyes of the
“ heart, and which Men have very
“ much loved in the Martyrs, even
“ when their members were rent in pie-
“ ces by Wild Beasts; when they were
“ covered all over with Blood; when their
“ Entrails were torne by the teeth of

“Mad Beasts, Eyes saw nothing which
“did not give them horror. What
“then was it which made these Martyrs
“loved in this state, if it were not the
“beauty of Justice which remain’d entire
“in those mangled Members?”

Now if Justice may be beloved, there may be joy in the contemplation of it. Because there is a pleasure in seeing and knowing what we love; and there is so much more thereof, by how much the love is greater, and the knowledge more clear. If the contemplation of Justice do not touch us very sensibly in this life, ’tis because we know it not well, and love it but weakly. But yet it is easie to comprehend that by augmenting this love and this knowledge, the pleasure of the Soul ought to encrease proportionably.

Now ’tis what properly happens in the other life. We shall there see Justice it self, not in troubled rivolets, and disfigured Images, but in its own source. It will manifest it self to us in all its beauty, in all its Grandeur, and in all its Majesty.

And as this Justice is God it self, this prospect will excite transports and ravishments of love and joy, so lively and ardent,

ardent, that no Human capacity can be able to comprehend the impetuosity and the violence of it. But what we may comprehend, is, that their enjoyment of this love, which is in the possession of its Object, ought to produce by necessity an ineffable joy and pleasure in the Soul, or rather it is it self this joy and pleasure, being that joy is nothing but a love enjoying what it loves.

By this 'tis also evident, that the love of God which shall cause the felicity of the Saints, shall have nothing of mercenary nor interested, but shall be perfectly cleansed from all mixture of self-love; for this love being the love of Justice, it does not relate God to Man, but Man to God. The Spirit of the happy will be quite struck through with the infinite excellency and greatness of God, and the meanness and the wretchedness of creatures, with the Justice of the right God hath over them; which obliges them to relate all their being and all their actions to his glory, with the dismal injustice of a creature who subtracts himself from his order, who withdraws him self from his dependence, and who makes himself his own destruction.

destruction. And these lights wherewith they shall all be filled, being joyned to the ardent love of this Justice which prescribes them these duties, will incline them to annihilate themselves continually before the Majesty of God, and to prefer him before themselves through an eternal love, as *St. Austin says*. They shall place their happiness in a condescending to his will, and they shall be by this means incapable of the least seeking of self-interest.

But in not seeking themselves at all, they shall not be less happy. Gods greatness, glory, and his felicity will cause their joy, and God communicating himself to them with an ineffable effusion, shall unite them so strictly to his Being, that they shall be as it were plunged in him, and they shall participate of his greatness and of his felicity.

Mens Minds are feeble in this Life to comprehend the Joy which the possession of God will produce in the happy Souls. Therefore *St. Paul* expresses it no otherwise than by saying, *The eye hath not seen, nor the ear hath not heard, what God has provided for those who love him, 1 Cor. 2. 9.* We can only judge that it shall be something inconceivable, seeing
 'twill

'twill be the effect of God's Magnificence, and the accomplishment of his eternal Love for his Elect.

Nevertheless, to form some Idea thereof, it is good to conduct the Understanding through these Degrees. Although we see Creatures only in company and separately, and that the knowledge we have of them be extremely limited; yet it cannot be denied but that there is some pleasure in contemplating Beauty.

This pleasure would be greater, if our Minds becoming larger could conceive many of them together.

What would it be then, if it were able to comprehend them all at a time, and contemplate the marvelous relations they have together to frame the beauty of the whole Universe?

It seems that this spectacle might be capable to satisfy and fill Mans Mind, and yet 'tis nothing in comparison of that which the happy Souls enjoy. They see all creatures in God, but moreover they see the God of all creatures, and this sight makes all Creatures appear to them but as nothing, and that they disappear presently, so much they are filled with the greatness and the excellency of their Creator.

Saint

Saint *Austin* hath not disdained to make use of these degrees, to raise us to the knowledge of a Sovereign good. Consider, saith he, In Ps. 84. *That all you see that's faire and excellent in the World, all therein that draws your hearts, is nothing but the handiwork of God; now if these things have so much beauty, what ought we to judge of God? If there be so much greatness in his works, what is the greatness he possesseth in himself? Si hac pulchra sunt, quid est ipse? Si hac magna sunt, quantus est ipse?*

If you find so many pleasures, saith he, in another place, in Ps. 26. in what you call wealth, in that wealth, say I, which of it self is no wealth, because it is moveable, and nothing that's moveable can be wealth of it self; what then will be the pleasure in the contemplation of unchangeable and eternal wealth, which remains always in the same state; seeing all things which you call wealth, cannot please you, if it be not wealth, and it cannot be wealth except it be borrowed from the bounty of him who is it of himself?

If all creatures be in respect of God, but as a drop of Water is to the main Ocean, what can all the consolations be which Creatures are able to give us,
but

but a small share or part of this drop, which entering into the heart of Man, leaves him as small as he was before? But when God shall enter in the same manner as he shall enter by glory, 'tis an impetuous River, 'tis a torrent of delights, according to the Scripture. It enlargeth and dilateth Mans heart. It extends and raiseth it infinitely beyond the boundaries of its nature, that it may receive this abundance of joy, wherewith it will take pleasure to inebriate it, as the Prophet speaks; *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate Domus tua.*

The possession of God will replenish in such a manner all the necessities and all the desires of the Soul, that all her capacity of loving, desiring, and enjoying, will be absolutely drained, and she will be unfit to desire and to love any thing without God, because she will find there all, and God will be all things to her. "Gold, saith St. Austin, "In Ps. 33. is not the same here as "Silver, nor Wine the same as Bread, "Light is not Drink: But God is all "to those who possess him. He will "be our Food, by warranting us from "Hunger; our Drink, in satisfying our "Thirst; our Light, in enlightening
"our

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"our Darknes; our support, in prefer-
 "ving us from becoming Weak. He
 "will possess us absolutely, in giving
 "himself to us. We shall not do one
 "another wrong by possessing him. Eve-
 "ry one shall possess him thus entirely,
 "but he shall not hinder another like-
 "wise from possessing him, because we
 "shall all be but as one, and God shall
 "possess us all in unity and totally.

But what Idea soever may be formed
 of this Sovereign happiness by the means
 of these Images, it must be allowed that
 all is nothing, and even that the Soul is
 not capable in this life neither to con-
 ceive it, nor to undergo it. For it
 must needs be, that God to render her
 susceptible of these divine communi-
 cations, and of this torrent of delights
 he reserves for her, raise her to an-
 other state, and render her resembling
 him, in a manner so divine, that St.
Austin is not affraid to say, that when
 this ineffable joy shall be acknowledged
 by us, humane understanding shall perish,
 and become divine: In Ps. 35. *Cum*
accepta fuerit ista ineffabilis Latitia, perit
quodammodo Mens Humana, & fit divina.
St. Gregory of Nazianze, In Or. 15. P. 302.
Saith, That the Trinitie, disperseth it self,
into,

into all our Souls, *τελειοῦ ὅλης ὁλῆς μὴ γινώσκουσιν*. And he expresseth in many places the state of the Blessed, by that of being made divine.

If we could have any knowledge thereof, it should be by those to whom God hath given sometimes even in this life some drops of this divine Water, wherewith he will inebriate the Saints in Heaven: And those who have made this happy tryal, do all declare, that all the joys of this World are nothing in comparison of those which he will cause Souls to feel in those happy moments. 'Tis but reading what *St. Teresa*, *St. Bernard*, *St. Austin*, and all those whom we have no reason to suspect, would distribute unto us, imaginations and dreams; or rather, we need but read what the Evangelist saith thereof, when relating to us that light spark of Glory which Jesus Christ shewed to his Disciples upon mount *Tabor*, he represents them as out of themselves, and transported with what they saw.

Notwithstanding, if Humane joys be nothing in comparison of those which God gives to his Saints yet living, it is certain also, that all the joys of living Saints are yet nothing in comparison
of

of those of the other life. It is always true to say, that we know not God here but as through a Glass and by an Enigm. *Videmus per speculum & in Enigmate.* But we do not see him openly; and by the means of these Divine Taits, all these Celestial joys that these Saints, Men and Women, have experienced, are only some drops of this Ocean whereinto the Blessed are plunged, little rays of this immense light which illuminates them, and light sparks of this great fire of love which inflames them.

CHAP. X.

Of the eternal Employment of the Blessed.

AS Mens Pleasure consists here below in a variety of Action, and all long Employments tire their Spirits as well as their Bodies; they are troubled at first to comprehend what is said concerning the Lives of the Blessed, that it will not have that vicissitude of Actions wherewith that of Men is diversified upon Earth: and the Fathers, who humble

ble themselves sometimes even to disperse the most frivolous doubts, have not been unmindful of this. *St. Austin* treats thereof in divers places, and is always careful in giving us a true Idea of the eternal Employ of the Blessed, to go beyond these mean and humane Thoughts.

He does it sometimes more obscurely, as at the end of one of his Sermons *de Temp. Ser. 153.* where he speaks thereof in these Terms. *When we shall be in the House of God, which is in Heaven, we shall not onely praise God during the fifty days of the Resurrection; we shall have no other Employ there for all Eternity: We shall see him, we shall love him, and we shall praise him: what we shall see will never lessen in our eyes: what we shall love will never perish: and what we shall praise shall never cease to deserve our praises. All will be eternal, and without end, in that Life.*

These Words make us see at the same time, that a heavenly Life can never change, and why it is incapable thereof. It is impossible to see God, and not to love him; nor to love him perfectly, without seeing him. So the Sight of God necessarily produceth Love, and Love Praises; and all these
Actions.

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Actions shall never end, because what inclines us to alter and change our Actions in this Life, shall not be found in the other.

We cease beholding certain Objects with pleasure, and we are inclined to change them, because we find therein some faults; and all that is in the World being limited, we desire to see something more. It's then the fault of the Objects which makes us weary of them. Now this never happens in seeing God: For we never observe there any Defects, nor any Limits; so that we are never weary. *Quid videbimus non deficiet.* And as we are never weary of seeing him, and as he is always present with the Soul, she cannot cease to love him, nor consequently to praise him: 'Tis what this holy Doctor expresses in another place, in these Terms: "Happy, "saith he, are those who shall dwell in "thy House: *Beati quia habitant in domo* " *tue Domine.* But what shall they do "there? They shall praise you, adds the "Prophet, world without end. Thus "all their whole Life shall be nothing "but a continual praising of God, and "an eternal *Alleluia.* And do not think, "Brethren, they can find any disgust in
" this.

“ this only Occupation, because you
 “ cannot praise God any long time:
 “ There are on the one side Necessities
 “ of Life which dissuade you; and on
 “ the other, not seeing God, you are
 “ not so sensibly touched. If we could
 “ cease loving God in the other
 “ Life, we should also cease praising
 “ him: But Love being eternal, because
 “ we can never be filled with seeing the
 “ Beauty of God, do not fear ever
 “ ceasing to praise whom you cannot
 “ cease to love. *Si deficias ab amore de-*
ficies a laude: si autem amor sempiternus
erit, quia illa insatiabilis pulchritudo est,
noli timere ne non possis semper laudare,
quem semper poteris amare. August. in
 Psal. 81.

Therefore to express the Peace,
 Tranquillity, and Repose which shall
 accompany this eternal Action of the
 Blessed, he says in another place, *That*
the business of Loving God will be the
only Empl'y of those who shall have no
other; the only Labour of those who shall
be delivered from all Labour; the only
Action of those who shall enjoy a perfect
Repose; and the only Care of those who
shall be free from all sorts of Care and
Inquietudes. *Erit hoc otiosorum negotium,*
 hoc

hoc opus vacantium; hac actio quietorum, haec cura securorum. Aug. in Psal. 110.

But what shall be the cause of all these eternal Praises? This is not hard to be understood. They shall praise God for what they shall see in him, for what shall ravish them, and for what shall fill them with Joy and Admiration: For their Praises shall be nothing but the effusion of their Transport and Raptures. They shall praise him for what he is, for his infinite Greatness, his Holiness, his Mercy, his Justice, and his Omnipotency. They shall praise him because of the Miracles he hath operated. They shall praise him for the Favours which he hath done them, for the Mercies he hath exercised upon them, and all his Elect. Each Elect shall praise for himself, and for all others. They shall joyn all together to sing for ever God's Mercies towards them, *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.* Lastly, They shall sacrifice continually in their Hearts as it were Holocausts of Charity; and Jesus Christ joyning his to that of theirs, shall offer them without intermission as a Sacrifice of Love to his Father. *Tota ista redempta civitas, haec est congregatio societasque Sanctorum universale*

versale Sacrificium offertur Deo per Sacerdotem Magnum qui etiam seipsum obtulit pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus essemus.
Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 10. c. 6.

This is the Idea which ought to be formed concerning the Occupation of the Blessed ; and though we be far from comprehending this State, and this Life, yet we may easily comprehend, that they cannot be tired with so holy an Employment ; because we change Actions only to find out others than those we have, and thus the alteration can only be convenient for those who aim at Felicity, and not for those who possess it.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Peace of a Heavenly Life.

WE have already given cause, by several things which we have said, to consider in the Lives of the Blessed a Sovereign Peace. But the Peace they enjoy is so great a Good, that it ought to be particularly considered ; and this Object is so capable of drawing our Hearts, that 'tis just to represent

present it apart from the rest, to the end it may work a great Impression.

We see also, that 'tis under this Idea that St. *Austin* represented generally Beatitude; and likewise he inspired such a Love into his People of this heavenly Peace, that they could not forbear at the very name of Peace to make a shew of their Transport, by Acclamations which broke off the Discourse of those who spake to them. 'Tis what St. *Austin* observes himself with comfort, in the Sermon he made on the Psalm *Lauda Jerusalem, Psal. 147*. For having pronounced these Words, *Qui posuit fines tuos pacem*, he was interrupted by a noise of Acclamations; whereupon he spake to them in this manner: "Tis a great
 "comfort to me, Brethren, that the
 "love of Peace can make you send forth
 "these Acclamations from the very bot-
 "tom of your Hearts. You have been
 "surprized with a sudden and prompt
 "Joy, I had as yet explicated nothing,
 "but only pronounced the Verse of the
 "Psalm, and behold you already tran-
 "sported. What is't that forceth these
 "Cries from you? The Beauty of Peace
 "hath shewn in your Souls, and struck
 "your Hearts. There is no more need
 "of

“of my speaking, nor enlarging on these
 “Praises; the motions of your Hearts,
 “have prevented my Words. Let us
 “put off the Praises of Peace, to the
 “Habitation of Peace. ’Tis there we
 “shall praise it fully, because we shall
 “possess it perfectly. If we love it al-
 “ready with so much fervency, having
 “only an imperfect Idea thereof, how
 “shall we love it when we shall possess it
 “in its perfection? I will only tell you
 “then, Beloved Children, O Children
 “of the Kingdom of Heaven, O Citi-
 “zens of *Jerusalem*, That the Word *Je-*
 “*rusalem* signifies, that *we shall see Peace*
 “*there.*

This Idea was so familiar to him,
 that in another place he reduceth there-
 unto all Beauty. “What, saith he, in
 “*Psal.* 36. will be the Pleasures we shall
 “expect? They shall be accumulated
 “with an abundance of Joy, answers the
 “Prophet. Our Gold shall be the Peace;
 “our Silver shall be the Peace; our
 “Lands shall be the Peace; our God shall
 “be our Peace: This Peace shall be all
 “things to us. And this Peace is God
 “himself, as is said in the sequel.

But to lay open what as yet we
 see only confusedly in these general
 N Terms,

Terms, we must consider with St. *Austin*,
de Civit. Dei, l. 19. c. 12. That as there is
 no man who desires not Joy, likewise
 there is none who wisheth not for Peace;
 and that even those who make War with
 themselves, do it only to overcome, and
 by consequence only to arrive at Peace.

He saith also, "Those who break the
 "Peace, do not break it because they
 "hate it, but to procure another ac-
 "cording to their Fancies. Thieves and
 "Robbers conserve Peace with their
 "Companions, to the end they may di-
 "sturb it Scot-free amongst others. All
 "the World desires to live in Peace,
 "with their Wives, Children, and Fami-
 "lies: And even the severity which is
 "used against those who disturb it, hath
 "no other end but to maintain it. This
 "desire of Peace is found amongst the
 "Wicked, as well as amongst the Good.
 "For they would have all things to ply
 "and yield to them, that nothing resist
 "them, which is a kind of Peace; and at
 "thesame time that they break it with
 "God, by revoking against him, they
 "desire it in their Souls and Bodies, but
 "cannot have it.

Now although this holy Doctor di-
 stinguishes afterwards divers sorts of
 Peace,

Peace, of the Body, of the sensitive Soul, and of the reasonable Soul, of the Soul and of the Body, and of the Soul with God, of Men amongst themselves, of a Town, of a State, of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; yet it is visible that the Celestial peace consists in being in a state where our desires may be fully satisfied, where nothing may be that may resist our wills, because all resistance and all oppositions to our desires do disturb and trouble the peace and tranquillity of the Soul.

If the wills of Wicked Men could be fully satisfied, they would enjoy Peace; but this cannot be. For, besides desiring to be happy without God, is to desire an impossibility, moreover, Gods Justice opposes the accomplishment of their desires. They desire pleasure, and Gods Justice overwhelms them with griefs. They covet honours, and this Justice heaps infamies upon them: They are ambitious to have all subject to to them, and Justice makes all Creatures revolt against them, as a punishment for their disobedience.

The *Stoicks* bethought themselves of an ingenious means to compass Peace, if it could have been possible for Men,

i. e. to desire nothing not in their power: And by this means Mans desires would have been fully satisfied, seeing they would have asked nothing but what they should be able to give themselves.

But they were not careful to consider that the Soul it not Mistress of her desires: That there are some Natural ones which she cannot stifle: That she cannot but wish not to be deceived, not to suffer any harm, and not to die; *Non falli, non offendi, non mori*: That she is made to love: That not finding in her self a perfect good, she must seek it out of her self, and that 'tis impossible that desiring this Good, she can be in Peace whilst she does not possess it, being her will is not satisfied, *saith St. Austin*, in Epist. 25. *Ubi pax, ibi requies, ubi requies, ibi finis appetendorum*. And consequently, not possessing what we wish as our end, there is no rest; and where there is no rest, there is no Peace.

Thus the *Stoicks* Doctrine, which was the ground of all their Philosophy, was really but a thought without any solidity, and is not the thing wherein the Peace of the Blessed consists. They are not exempt from desires inseparable from

from Mans nature, but they are absolutely from all irregular and illegitimate desires: so God accomplishing all their just desires, they have none at all which are not absolutely satisfied: So that since the beginning of their happiness, even to eternity, they shall not know any contradiction, not any opposition, neither within nor without them, and this shall be their Peace.

They shall desire to be absolute Masters of their bodies, and that it may cause no harm to the Soul; and God will grant them this request so amply, that they shall have nothing to do but to wish themselves in a place, to be there, as St. *Austin* saith, De Civit. Dei. l. 22. c. 30. *Ubi volet Spiritus, ibi protinus erit Corpus.*

They shall desire not to be deceived, and they shall have a clear knowledge of all things, without error, labour or difficulty, because they shall drink Wisdom even at the Fountain head. *Rerum ibi omnium tam speciosa quam certa scientia, sine errore aliquo vel labore, ubi Dei sapientia de ipso suo fonte potabitur.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. 21. c. 24.

They shall desire they may not die, and they shall have an entire
N; assurance.

assurance of their ETERNAL happiness.

They shall desire perfect Justice, and they shall be so perfectly satisfied, that St. *Austin* saith, in comparison of this spring abounding with Justice, where-with they shall be filled, all that we can have in this life will be in lieu thereof but as a drop of Dew given us to assuage the miseries of this life, and to thaw the Ice of iniquity. In Ps. 122.

Quantumcunque justitia in nobis fuerit ros est nescio quis ad illum Fontem, ad illam Saginam stillicidia quedam sunt, quis vitam nostram molliant, & duram iniquitatem solvant.

They shall all be equally fill'd therewith, by the exclusion from all injustice, and all stain, all self-love, which will be incompatible with Beatitude, and would change Heaven into Hell.

It is true, they will not all be enriched alike with the gifts of God, and there will be among them several measures of Charity and Light, which will cause diversitie of dwellings in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; but each one, saith St. *Austin*, shall be perfectly content with his share, and shall not bear malice to those who shall have a greater abundance, because the unity of Charity

ty will reign in them. *Non erit invidia imparis Charitatis, quoniam regnabit in omnibus unitas Charitatis.* Aug. Tract. 67. in Joan.

'Tis yet, saith he else where, De Civit. Dei. l. 22. c. 30 one of the great goods of this City, that they do not bear malice to those whom they see above them; and we shall wish also as little to possess what we shall not have received, although we may be perfectly united to him who shall receive it, as the finger desires not to be the Eye, though the finger and the eye do enter into the structure of the same body. Every one will so possess there his share, one more, the other less, that he shall have the gift of not desiring more than what he shall have received.

This inequality of gifts shall not at all trouble the Peace of this Heavenly Jerusalem, nor shall it be altered by the consideration the just shall have thereof, the punishment of the Wicked, nor likewise by that of the digressions and of the sins of our former lives. They shall not see in all that, any thing but occasions of praising Gods Justice and Mercy eternally. They shall approve all his actions, both as to themselves and others, and joyning perfectly their

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wills to his, nothing will be opposite
to their Wills, as nothing is opposite
to Will of God.

CH A P. XII.

Of the Unity of the Blessed.

D*Avid* does not only invite us to
contemplate the Heavenly *Jeru-*
salem, but he proposeth to us more-
over, as a motive the most capable
to incline us thereunto, the Divine uni-
on of her Inhabitants: *Jerusalem, saith*
he, which is built like a Town, whose
Inhabitants are united together. *Jeru-*
salem quæ edificatur ut civitas, cujus par-
ticipatis ejus in idipsum.

Indeed there is hardly any Object
more sweet and comfortable, than this
Union of the Society of the Elect. But
yet to comprehend it better; we must ex-
tend our minds through all the Degrees
of Disunion and Union which can be
observed among intelligible Creatures.

Sovereign Disunion is found in the
Society of the Wicked, whether Men
or Devils: for it is exterior and inte-
rior, both together. Each Reprobate,

as we have already said, is an Enemy to all the rest; he hates them all, and is hated of all; he knows their Hatred, and his is known to them. Therefore if there be any Society in them, 'tis but a Society of Place and Torments, a Society the effect whereof is only to afflict one another, and reciprocally to contribute to each others Misery.

What comes nearest this horrible Disunion, is that which is found amongst Men, where the Devil reigns, and in the Kingdom of Concupiscence: For, besides the outward Wars and Divisions this Disunion produceth in many, they are all inwardly divided, as all seeking, their own proper Interest.

Corrupt Man loves nothing but himself, and can love nothing but in relation to himself: so that when he finds not this relation, he ceases loving, and begins to hate. Therefore if he have not an actual hatred against all others, yet he has the Principle thereof. 'Tis but presenting him the Object, in shewing him that some one is contrary to his Designs, to his Desires, and to his proper Interests, to incline him to hate it actually.

But as this Hatred which Worldly
N. 5. Men

Men have for others, is often included in its Principle ; and moreover as they do not know the Heart and Thoughts of one another, they sometimes think they are loved, or at least are not hated by other Men. Thus their interior Union, although real, remains yet concealed under the appearances of exterior Union, to which they are obliged by the several Necessities which render them depending on one another.

From this miserable Union we may proceed to an Union which may be stiled happy, but impossible : It's that which is amongst the true Christians, who have the Holy Ghost in their Hearts : For it cannot be denied but that they are united, seeing they are animated by the same Spirit ; and this Spirit making them love God, makes them also love one another, God residing by his Grace in the Just. They assist one another by the mutual help of their Prayers ; and they all participate, in some sort, of the Goods and Evils of each other.

But although this Union may be the greatest Good belonging to Man in this Life, yet he must acknowledge that it is very defective, and mingled with a great quantity of Miseries.

For,

For, in the first place, true Christians generally do not know one the other; so they cannot tell that they are united, and they enjoy not the good of their Union. The number of true Christians which every man knows, is always very small, and we are not always outwardly very much united with those we know. The variety of Understandings, Prospects, and Humours, oftentimes produceth among pious Persons a kind of exterior disunion, and the most strict Amities are subject to wax cold, and to be changed and altered by false Reports, Suspensions, and rash Judgment. When we shall have freed all these Faults from the Ties and Obligations we may have to vertuous Men in this World, there rest two which are inseparable from them in this Life; the one, that we know not evidently the bottom of any Mans Heart; the other, that we cannot be assured of a Perseverance in Amity with whomsoever it may be, no more than in other Virtues.

For 'tis by the retrenchment of all these Defects, that we must conceive the Perfection of the Unity of the Blessed. They shall not only be all united inwardly and outwardly, but this Unity shall

shall not be unknown to them. The Hearts of all the Citizens of this City of Peace shall be discovered to every of them. They shall not see in any of these Inhabitants any diversity in Opinions, Desires, or Intentions. They shall all love one another, and they shall all know they are loved by them; they shall never fear that this Love can ever alter by any coldness.

In fine, All that the mind of Man hath possibly been able to invent, to form a perfect Idea of Friendship, is found there in a manner infinitely raised above all they have said thereof: For they have been very far from conceiving this mutual penetration of Minds and Hearts, this Unity of Lights and Desires, and this incredible ardour of Love which is found in Heaven.

Now if the greatest of all earthly Goods be to love a small number of People, and to know that one is loved, and even to open ones Heart to others with an entire confidence; what Joy ought this perfect Union which it hath with all others, to produce in the Hearts of all the Elect? To see in them the ardent Sentiments of Charity which they have for it, and to know also that they see theirs;

theirs; to love them perfectly, and to see them perfectly happy? May not it truly be said, That they all enjoy thus a multiplied and redoubled Felicity, by that of others; and that each Elect shall not only be happy in his proper Person, but in the Persons of others, being he shall look upon their Happiness as his own?

What Joy to be united to so many Saints, of whom we hear spoken in the Church-Books? to know the ways by which God hath conducted them to the Happiness they possess, and all the motions which he has formed in their Hearts? to know all that's passed betwixt God and them, and what remains unknown to Men? to know entirely this innumerable Multitude, whereof we know so little? to penetrate into the Hearts of the Patriarchs, Prophets, the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and all the Saints both known and unknown? to know not only the History of the whole Celestial *Jerusalem*, which compriseth the whole Conduct of God upon the Elect, but to know it by themselves, and by the manifestation of their Hearts? to see the End, the Progress, and the Accomplishment of all things, and in what manner

manner all things have been made only for the Elect ? O History which only deserves to be the Object of Christians Curiosity, and which ought to blot out in them all other Curiosity ! O happy History, which only regards the happy, and whose knowledge renders us happy !

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Dominion of the Blessed.

THere is no doubt to be made but the Blessed do all possess a Dominion or Authority, seeing that *Jesus Christ* himself declared them Kings, in his Judgment, when he said to them, *Come, the well-beloved of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* 'Tis also in consideration of this Supreme Honour whereunto they ought to be raised, that *David* cried out, *How great, O Lord, is the glory wherewith you have honoured your friends ? How strongly is their Principality established ?* *Nimis honorificati sunt amici tui Deus, nimis confortatus est principatus eorum.* *Psal.* 139.

How

How should not they be Kings in the other Life, seeing they are so in this, and St. *Peter* calls them, even in this World, Regal Priesthood, *Regale Sacerdotium*? How should they not be so, seeing they are Coheirs, Brethren, and Members of *Jesus Christ*, to whom his Father hath made all things subject? *Subjecit es omnia*, as St. *Paul* saith; and they are associated to his Inheritance, to his Body, and by consequence to his Dominion?

To know its Greatness, we need only compare it with that of Earthly Kings, and so consider the difference.

What we observe in the Power of Earthly Kings, is, That 'tis terminated by their Deaths; and so being annexed to their Lives, becomes as vain and as unsolid as Mens Lives.

Likewise they do not possess it all the time they have the Title: For what is the Sovereignty of a King who sleeps? And who can believe, that a King who shall always have been asleep, had truly been King? They are not then Kings effectively, when they do enjoy Sovereignty, and act not like Kings. Now how much time is there in the Lives of Kings, wherein they do not think of their Royalty, and act nothing but mean Functions?

Functions? But even when they think thereon the most, and would enjoy it the most, their Royalty does it exempt them from the miseries of this life and the infirmities of Nature? Do not trouble and vexation go about to attaque and seise them even upon the Throne? and do not they force them to forsake their Royal Employments, to bring them down to very common Actions? There must be small amusements which hinder them from thinking of them, to help them to bear the weight of this Crown, which they cannot maintain: and with all these miserable Comforts, there are some who have not stuck to believe, that 'tis more advantagious to free themselves absolutely thereof. If this resolution be rare, 'tis perchance because 'tis rare for Men to follow Reason. For who can recount the troubles and pains that those have, who appear the most happy, by maintaining their authority and power? how many supports and helps stand they in need of? how many Persons do they depend on? So that it may very well be said, Dominion is never bought but at the price of an infinity of Slavery, that there are no People more tormented and less:

less at liberty than Princes. We obey *Cesar*, saith *Cicero*, and *Cesar* is obedient to time. So as we cannot know whereunto he will oblige us, he knows not himself what the conjunctures of time will oblige him to. *Nos illi servimus, ille temporibus. Ita nec ille quid tempora postnatura sint, nec nos quid ipse postulet scire possumus.* Behold what this Idol of Humane Vanity and Ambition is, which Worldly Men look upon as the Sovereign felicity of this life.

'Tis but taking the contrary to all these defects and miseries, to conceive what this divine Kingdom, which God hath prepared for his Elect, is. It is a Kingdom which is not only Eternal in itself, but that renders those who possess it Eternal. As it cannot be lost, there needs no trouble to conserve it. We do not enjoy it by intervals and divers interruptions. We are never attacked by trouble, melancholy, nor by weariness. We are there free from all misery, bondage, and from all cares. 'Tis a Kingdom which is never troubled with any War, because there we are not attackable by any Enemy.

Lastly, 'tis a Kingdom possessed by an infinite of Kings, who are so far from diminishing

diminishing the grandeur and the power one of another, that they encrease and augment it on the contrary, and fortify it, because they have all one and the same heart, one and the same Minde, and make all together but one King, which is Jesus Christ. 'Tis to this Kingdom we are called. 'Tis this Kingdom which is promis'd us upon so favourable conditions, that to obtain it, 'tis sufficient to desire it sincerely.

CHAP. XIV.

What impressions Meditating of the Felicity of Heaven ought to make upon us.

AS we have hitherto only related the thoughts of the Fathers, to form the Idea of a Heavenly life, we will only follow them in the reflexions they have drawn from thence.

I.

Saint Paul lays open one which is of great concern, in representing all the Labours and all the Pains which Champions endured to acquire a corruptible Crown, thereby to excite us to

to undergo with alacrity the labours of a Christian life, to obtain an incorruptible Crown, and teaching us thereby, that the greatness of the good which we expect, ought to make us undervalue all the hardships of this life, whether we should suffer them when they happen to us, or that we should expose our selves to them when God engages us therein.

'Tis in following this overture that St. *Austin* makes use of the example of the Pains Men endure either to avoid Evils, or to acquire Temporal goods, that he may shew how much we ought to esteem as nothing the state of those we ought to suffer to gain Heaven: Men saith he, *De verb. Domi. secundum* "Mat. Ser. 11. suffer the Iron and the
 "Fire to be made use of to deliver
 "them by a more short grief, but more
 "violent, from those pains of an Ulcer,
 "which though longer, would not have
 "lasted continually. A Soldier useth
 "his body to hardships of War, there-
 "by to procure himself rest, which he
 "enjoys much less time than he hath
 "passed in the fatigues and miseries
 "of this Profession. What shall I say
 "of those who trade by the Sea? To
 "what

“ what dangers are they exposed, to
 “ gain Riches, which are nothing but
 “ vain and perishable, which we can-
 “ not consume without more dangers
 “ than we ought to undergo to acquire
 “ them? Why should not Charity do to
 “ obtain Beatitude, what Coveteounesse
 “ doth to gain Worldly Goods, which
 “ are nothing but real misery?

He makes use of this same Reason
 after a more lively manner, in his Letter
 to *Armentarius* and *Paulinus*.

“ We expose our selves, saith he, to
 “ so many perils and dangers, to so ma-
 “ ny labours, and to so many losses, to
 “ prolong or to render this Life more
 “ agreeable, which must necessarily end
 “ one day, although we cannot be ex-
 “ empt from Death, but only put it
 “ back for some time. By how much
 “ more reason are we obliged to suffer
 “ all these pains to acquire everlasting
 “ Life, where Nature is not obliged to
 “ fly Death with so much care, nor Faint-
 “ heartedness to fear it with so much in-
 “ famy, nor Sagacity to support it with
 “ Courage? For Death then will be no
 “ more dreadful, seeing then there will
 “ be no more Death. How then would
 “ you not be of the number of those
 chaste

“ chaste Lovers of this eternal and most
 “ blessed Life, being you see that this
 “ transitory Life, miserable as it is, hath
 “ such passionate Lovers?

“ At what cost and labours do Men
 “ endeavour to prolong their Labours?
 “ and by how many frights to fly Death,
 “ to the end they may be able to fear it
 “ for a longer time?

“ What Grievs do not the Iron and
 “ the Fire make them suffer, who put
 “ themselves into the hands of Physicians
 “ to be cured? ’Tis not yet that they
 “ may not die, but that they may pro-
 “ long it some little time. The torments
 “ they suffer are certain, the hopes of
 “ prolonging their days uncertain, and
 “ the violence of the grief often brings
 “ those to death, who have only exposed
 “ themselves thereto through the meer
 “ fear of death. Thus having rather
 “ chosen to suffer death to avoid pain and
 “ grief, it happens that they suffer at
 “ once both grief and death; not only
 “ because they find sometimes death in
 “ grief it self, to which they have had
 “ recourse to avoid death; but also be-
 “ cause having suffered so much to be
 “ healed, they are at last constrained to
 “ abandon Life, which though recover’d
 by

“by a thousand torments, cannot al-
 “ways last, it being always mortal, nor
 “endure any long time, it being so short,
 “nor likewise in this short abode have a
 “continuance which can be certain, it
 “being always uncertain.

II.

This same Consideration may be ap-
 plied to a thousand Objects which every
 day present themselves in the World,
 and which are able to convince us, that
 we do not do to obtain eternal Life,
 what worldly People do to gain a For-
 tune, or to satisfy their Passions.

For Example; When we see those
 who would raise and put themselves for-
 ward into the World, so vigilant in
 managing all that may be for their pur-
 pose, so circumspect in avoiding all that
 may be prejudicial to them, so patient in
 suffering rebukes from those to whom
 they make their Count, so complying to
 adapt themselves to their Humours, so
 laborious to prosper in their Designs, so
 ill managers of their Health when em-
 ployed in their Concerns, so full of Pas-
 sion which possesseth them, and thinking
 continually of the means to prosper
 therein; have we not reason to rebuke
 our selves of the negligence with which
 we

we seek eternal Life, and to cry out with St. Bernard, *What shame and confusion for us? They have more zeal for their misfortune, than we have for our good: They run with more violence and promptness to death, than we to life.* St. Bern. Ser. de Temp.

53.

When we see the Evils Men undergo to satisfy some criminal Passions, a Mans Labour possessed with the Passion for Wealth, his care, his vigilancy, his inquietness, his watching, his renouncing of all sorts of Pleasures, the dangers and the fatigues wherein smoky Honour engages Men, ought we not to say to our selves, That if Men take so much pains to damn themselves in this World, is't not very reasonable they take some pains to save themselves? And 'tis a great shame that a base timorousness of some much less and very wholesom troubles, should make us fly from the way of God, at the same time that in the way of this World we must suffer some much more hard, which will stand us nothing.

Cum in itinere Dei faciliora & utilia ignava formidine fugiuntur in itinere sæculari duriora & sterilia arduoso labore tolerantur.

In fine, May not we say to our selves, seeing the difficulties there are in the World to prosper in the least Enterprises, to procure our selves any Establishment, to warrant the Friendship of the Great ones of this World, what *St. Austin* reports of a Worldly Man, (*Confess. l. 8. c. 6.*) “who said to one of his Friends, having read the Life of *St. Anthony*, Tell me, I pray you, what do we pretend to arrive at by all our Labours? what is it we aim at? and what is it we have in prospect in all our Pretences? Can we extend our Hopes further in the Life we lead at Court, than to have the Emperour’s Ear? And when we are come to that, how brittle and inconstant and perilous is it? and how many dangers must we run, to arrive at a state yet more dangerous? For how long time shall we live in this manner? ’Tis but desiring heartily to be a Friend of Gods, and presently I shall become what I would be. He said it, and immediately he was so, having at the same instant quitted all worldly Pretences, to give himself wholly to God. Why does not this great Object of an everlasting Life, and the meanness of all
 “worldly

“worldly things we desire, make the
 “same Impression upon us? and where-
 “fore at least do we not reproach our
 “selves without intermission, for our
 “stupidity and baseness?

III.

St. *Austin* does not only make use of
 this Consideration to animate Christians
 to suffer with courage all the Evils of
 this Life, but also to encourage them to
 humble themselves in the good Actions
 they must practice to acquire eternal
 Life, by shewing them that they do no
 more to gain Heaven, than the *Pagans*
 did for their Country.

“What is there more glorious, saith
 “he, *de Civitate Dei*, l. 3. c. 8. than to dis-
 “dain all the Charms of this present
 “Life, for that Celestial and Eternal
 “Country; seeing that a *Roman* was able
 “to set a Resolution to put his Children
 “to death for an Earthly and Temporal
 “one? If the desire of procuring Li-
 “berty for Persons who ought to die,
 “has been able to arm a Father against
 “his own Children, what wonder if for
 “a true Liberty, which makes us free
 “from Sin, from Death, and from the
 “Devil, we do not put our Children to
 “death, but place the Poor of *Jesus*
 O “Christ

"*Christ* in the number of our *Children*?

"If another *Roman* having delivered
 "his *Country* from the fury of its *En-*
 "emies, although it had so ill acknow-
 "ledged this Service, as to banish him
 "for following the Passion of his envi-
 "ous Foes, did nevertheless save it out
 "of the Hands of the *Gauls*; why should
 "a Christian boast of himself, as having
 "done a great thing, because perhaps
 "having received in the ~~Church~~ some
 "barbarous and infamous injury from
 "his Enemies; he is not for all that
 "numbred amongst the Hereticks?

"What tho' there have been found,
 "who have put their Hands into a
 "burning Fire, thereby to affright an
 "Enemy King? who will believe he
 "hath done any thing which merits the
 "Kingdom of Heaven, when to obtain
 "it he hath abandoned, I do not say his
 "Hand, but his whole Body, to the
 "Flames of his Persecutors? I know

"What if some have offered them-
 "selves to death, to appease the Gods
 "by their Blood? Let not the Martyrs
 "be proud, if through the heat of their
 "Faith and Charity they have resisted
 "even to the effusion of their Blood,
 "for this *Country* where true and im-
 "mortal

“mortal Felicity is found; and have not
 “only loved their Brethren for whom
 “they have shed it, but also their Ene-
 “mies who shed it.

This holy Doctor urgeth these kind of Reflexions yet further; but these are sufficient to shew, that if Eternal Life were in our thoughts, we should see nothing almost in the World which would not help to animate and humble us: For, what is more just than to work to obtain Heaven, what worldly men do for secular things? And what is there more base and unworthy, than to be negligent in doing what will make us eternally happy, which is no more than what worldly men do daily for frivolous and base Ends?

IV.

Another Reflexion very natural, and of a very great extent, which the Consideration of eternal Happiness which we expect, ought to produce in us, is, That seeing this Happiness is in effect our sovereign Good and last End, it ought to keep that rank and place in our Hearts. Now the property, saith Saint *Austin*, in Ep. 56. of sovereign Good is, that we relate all things thereunto: *Summum bonum id dicitur quò cuncta referuntur.*

Let Eternal Life then be not only our End by Words, but let it be so really and truly. Let it be the principal Object of our Minds, the principal End of our Actions. Let it be the principal and the most active Cause of our Passions; and let this Character be observed in our Life, That we prefer nothing before our Salvation, that we aim at Heaven, and that we sigh after other things than Terrestrial ones.

V.

But because we cannot accomplish these Obligations, unless we love an Eternal Life; nor love it, unless we think of it; we ought therefore to make use of all holy Inventions, which may renew the Idea thereof, and engrave it deeper in our Hearts, and follow the Considerations which the Holy Fathers have given us. The Spirit of God which animated them, hath made their Piety to consist in raising them to the thought and to the desire of an Eternal Life, through all the States and Conditions, and all the Rencounters of this Life.

If they have been in Prosperity, and in the possession of any Temporal Goods, they have looked upon them as the Comforts of miserable and condemned

ned persons, and not as recompences to make us happy. *Hæc omnia miserorum sunt damnatorumque solatia, non premia beatorum.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 22. cap. 24.

They have been careful not to consider these Goods but as refreshments which are granted us from God in the course of our Voyage, and not as those whereunto we hope to arrive at the end of our Voyage. God, saith St. Austin, in Ps. 34. comforts us in our way, provided that we comprehend we are in the way, and that all this life, and all things we make use of therein, ought only to be to us as a retreat for Travellers, and not as a House where we would dwell. *Tota ista vita, & omnia quibus uteris in hac vita, sic tibi debent esse tanquam stabulum viatorum tanquam Domus habitatori.*

If they have wished Temporal Goods for themselves or for others, they have had a care not to esteem them but in such a manner which had relation to a Heavenly Life. Let our Lord God, saith St. Austin, receive us into his Arms, to comfort us by the Goods of the Earth, and render us happy by the possession of Eternal Goods. *Dominus nos suscipias consolandos Temporalibus, Beatificandos æternis.*

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nis. Even in the use they have made of them, they have always had other Goods in prospect, and have endeavoured to make these Humane Consolations serve to stir themselves up to desire them. *What shall the Heavenly Goods be, saith St. Austin, de Civit. Dei. l. 22. 24. seeing we find so much pleasure in Terrestrial ones? Quid igitur illa sunt, si tot, ac talia, ac tanta, sunt ista? Let these things, saith he elsewhere, in Ps. 84. which we love in this World, be a means to make us love God more, being he surpasses them so much in beauty and grandeur.*

VJ.

If they have seen these Goods of the World in the hands of Wicked Men, instead of taking occasion to bear them spite, they have been careful only to fortifie themselves in the love and the esteem of Eternal Goods.

What will he give, saith St. Austin, De Civit. l. 22. c. 24. to those whom he has predestinated to life, seeing he gives so much to those whom he has predestinated to death? Quid dabit eis quos predestinavit ad vitam; qui hac dedit etiam eis, quos predestinavit ad mortem? And they are so far from esteeming Wicked Men more, because

because they possess Terrestrial Goods, that they have taken occasion to despise those Goods, as being possibable by the Wicked.

Those Goods, saith he, in Ps. 62. *which God has given to the impious, are so vain, that they deserve very well to be possessed by them. Do not then look upon them as estimable, because you see the impious may have them. Quæ donat & malis tam frivola sunt, & hæc & malis donari digna sunt: ne tibi quasi magna videantur quæ possunt donari & malis.* If God did regard, saith he in another place, in Ps. 73. *these Terrestrial Goods as some thing of great value, he would not grant them to the Wicked; but he gives them to the Wicked, that the Good may learn to beg what's Good of him, which he gives not to the Wicked.*

VII.

'Tis thus that Humane consolations do not binder them from making *Jerusalem* the principal object of their joy and desires, as the Prophet saith: *Si non proposuero Jerusalem in principio latitæ meæ.*

But they have found in the afflictions and the Evils of this life yet more means to inflame themselves with a desire of Eternal life.

They have considered these afflictions and these crosses, which Men experience in the things they possess most lawfully, as advertisements God gives them to love nothing but Heaven, and not to consider as their Houses the transitory retreats where they rest as they pass by. *Docetur amare meliora per amaritudinem inferiorum, ne viator tendens ad patriam stabulum habeat per Domo sua.*

They have acknowledged that it was Gods Mercy to sow these bitternesses and disgusts amongst the sweets of Worldly things to hinder thereby Christians from cleaving thereunto, and to incline them to seek with more eagerness this other life, whose sweets are holy and wholesome. *Ideo autem huic vita male dulci, miscet amaritudines & tribulationes, ut alia, qua salubriter dulcis est requiratur.* Aug. in Ps. 43.

They have believed that 'twas a great good, that God in regard of them should rob the World of what it had that was deceitful; to the end their love, which might have swayed them thereto, should convert them entirely to this repose, which is neither of this World, nor of this life. *Aug. in Ps. 82.*

They

They have made use of this to acknowledge the misery of this present life, Mans feebleness, and the instability of Worldly things, the blindness of those who cleave thereunto; and they have endeavoured by this means to excite in them the desire of this Kingdom, whose least good is to be exempt from all these Evils. *Aug. in Ps. 32.*

They have endeavoured to perswade Men to desire for the other life, all they desire in this present, because they know all Goods are found there very excellent, and that the Sovereign Good which is enjoyed there comprises all. *If you love Riches, saith St. Austin, in Epist. 34. lay them up where they cannot perish. If you love Honour, seek only that which cannot be had without deserving it. If you love Salvation, strive to get it in such a manner, that you may apprehend losing it. Lastly, if you love Life, become worthy of such an one which may never be terminated by Death.* In fine, they have made use of the Heavenly felicity, to condemn all the Evils and all the Goods of this present life. Which made St. Bernard say, *De Aff. Dom. Serm. 4. n. 7. Happy is he who meditates always in the presence of our Lord, and who*
 O S considers

considers continually the happiness which he shall enjoy ! What is there that can appear hard to him who is continually employed with the thoughts that these Evils in this life have no proportion with the Glory we hope for ? And what can he desire in this corrupted World, whose Eye contemplates always the Goods of our Lord in the Land of the living ?

VIII.

It may also be said of the knowledge of the felicity of the Elect, as we have already said of the knowledge of the Misery of the Wicked, that it ought to serve as a rule to all the judgments which we make of the happiness or of the Misery of this World, as well as of its greatness and meanness. To be great and happy, is to have right to the Kingdom of God, to be in the way that leads hither, to possess the Goods of Grace, which are the seed, the first fruits, and the pledge thereof. To be Poor, Miserable, and reduced to the last extremity, is to be Robbed of our right, and to deserve Hell.

All the differences which arise from Humane conditions and qualities, are nothing in comparison of those. Also, Je-
sus

fus Christ, to imprint in us this truth, would needs begin with this that marvellous Sermon of the Mountain, which contains all the maxims of his Gospel, *Beati Pauperes Spiritu*, saith he, *quoniam ipforum est Regnum Caelorum*. That is to say, 'tis that right to this Eternal Kingdom which renders them Blessed, and that 'tis the loss of this right which renders them Miserable.

Finally, There needs but little Judgment to conclude from this great Idea that Religion gives us of the felicity of the other life, it being clear, that 'tis the thing we ought to level all our actions at, and by the sight of which we ought to guide all our lives, that we ought to have an extreme care to be well instructed in the way which leads thither, and not to be deceived in so important a matter, forasmuch as we are advised on the one side, that 'tis a very easie thing to goe astray in this Way, and on the other, that whosoever goes astray engages himself in the way which leads to Hell, because all that tends not to Eternal life, tends to Eternal death, as St Francis Sales saith.

CHAP. XV.

The Conclusion.

A Great Wis. of the latter Ages, considering on one side the certainty of Christian Religion, and on the other, the Lives of those who make profession thereof, expresseth the abhorishment whereinto he was to see so little relation thereunto, in these Terms. "Tis a great folly not to believe the Gospel, whose Truth is attested by the Blood of so many Martyrs, published openly by the Words of the Apostles, confirmed by the Testimony of the Elements, and confessed by the Devils themselves: But 'tis yet a much greater one, not to doubt at all of the Truth of the Gospel, and to live as if there were no doubt of its falshood. *Magna insania est Evangelio non credere, cujus veritatem sanguis Martyrum clamat, Apostolica resonant voces, Elementa loquuntur, Demones constantur: Sed longe major insania est, cum de veritate Evangelii non dubites, sic vivere quasi de ejus falsitate non dubitates.* Pic. de Mirand.

Now

Now what this Author says in general of Christian Religion, and of the lives of Christians, is particularly sensible in respect of the Points whereof we have treated in this Writing; that is to say, of Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

To make any question thereof, is a great folly; seeing they are established upon the Authority of the Gospel, and this upon so many Miracles, and the visible accomplishment of so many wonderful Prophecies.

Jesus Christ, saith St. Austin, in Ps. 73; hath executed fully all he had promised. Shall we believe that he would have deceived us in what he has told us concerning his Judgment? An vero exhibuit nobis omnia quæ promissit, & de sole die Judicii nos fecellit? All that hath been written, saith he yet, in Psal. 144. has been accomplished in course of time; and after that, can we doubt he should not also accomplish the rest? Per omnes generationes reddidit quæ scripta sunt, & quod restat non ei credetur?

There is no means that the Spirit can maintain it self in so unreasonable a pretension. We must believe, in spite of us, that there will be a Heaven and a Hell; that there will be an everlasting Fire, and a Glory which the Eyes have

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not seen, nor the Ears heard. No Man can withstand these Truths. We embrace them, and we make a Profession of believing them. But what is't this Faith produceth? and what Consequences hath it in the Conduct of Christians Lives?

'Tis herein that this excess of Folly appears much greater than the defect of Faith. We believe a Hell and a Heaven, and we live as if we were certain there were neither. We walk with the same security, the same joy, and the same quiet in the way to Hell, as if we had a clear conviction, that all that's said were only a Story; and we lose the Kingdom of Heaven with as much indifference, as if we believed it only to be an Illusion.

We likewise advance Extravagancy, even to make it pass for a sign of strength of Mind or Wit, never to think either of the one or the other, and to go brutishly to death, without ever so much as reflecting what must follow. We are troubled to suffer our selves to be spoken unto thereof; and those are oftentimes the Discourses the least hearkened to, which aim at placing these Objects before our Eyes. *We know well,*
faith.

saith one, all that is said thereof; but if you know it, why do not you do what this knowledge obliges you to do, without renouncing Reason?

'Tis an easie thing to acknowledge the excess of Folly in the Life of this World; and, which is strange, is, that it may be observed even in some Persons of Piety: For, in truth, there wants a great deal always to make these great Objects cause that Impression upon them which they should, and to make them live like People whose Voyage may be terminated at every moment by Heaven or Hell. It would be very easie to shew this in the most part of faults and weaknesses of pious Men; but it will be sufficient to conclude here generally, in respect of all the World, That the most evident, the most sensible, and the most convincing of all Truths, being, That we ought not to live in such a sort as may bring us to the heighth of all Miseries, and deprive us of the sovereign Good; every Man, who has never so little sense, ought to regulate his Life so, as that he may have cause to believe he is marching towards Heaven, and not towards Hell; and that whosoever does not so, ought, without intermitting

ting rebuke himself: That he ought to judge himself not only miserable, but out of his Wits: That he ought to sigh for his so miserable and unfortunate Condition, and acknowledge that all the World doth place it before his Eyes, to assist him to get out thereof. In a word, To be truly reasonable, is to labour seriously and only for Salvation. 'Tis yet to have some remain of Reason and Understanding, when we do it not at least to condemn our selves, and to desire an amendment of Life. But 'tis an abolishing absolutely of Reason, to live in repose, without being concerned for what shall happen in the next World.

THE SECOND
TREATISE,
 OF
Christian Vigilance;
 Containing
 Divers Means to keep our
 selves in the Presence of
 God.

CHAP. I.

Wherein Christian Vigilance consists.

THE Authority of Jesus Christ, who recommends Vigilance so often to us, who employs, to incline us thereunto, Motives as pressing as the terrour of Death, and who has been pleased to signify that he commanded it expressly to all, *Marc. 13. 37. Omnibus dico vigilate;*

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late; is sufficient to shew, that there is no Duty belonging to a Christian-life which is more indispensable.

He does not only command it to all Christians, but he commands it them at all times, joining it to the exercise of Prayer, which ought to be continual: *Luc. 21. 36. Watch, saith he, and pray continually; Vigilate omni tempore orantes.* For these are two Duties which cannot be separated. We must watch, that we may pray; and we cannot pray, but in proportion as we watch. They are as it were reciprocally in place of both Means and End one to the other. For, if it be necessary to watch that we may pray, we must pray that we may watch. We are disposed for Prayer by Vigilance. We obtain Vigilance by Prayer. And lastly, they include as it were each other in some sort; seeing that as he who prays watcheth, it is also true in some sort, that whosoever watcheth prayeth.

The Necessity of Vigilance being then thus established, there is nothing in question but to know the means how to practise it; and for that, 'tis necessary to know in what Vigilance consists.

Watching

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Watching is opposite to Sleeping, as well in Grace as in Nature. Now, *those who sleep*, saith the Apostle, *sleep in the night*; *Qui dormiunt nocte dormiunt*. If they should sleep in the day time, they would make Night of Day, because this Sleep would deprive them of the sight of the Light.

To be asleep, according to the Spirit, is then to be deprived of the true Light, and to have the spiritual Senses benumbed. But as in the same time those who sleep according to the Body are deprived of the Light, and of the thoughts of real Objects, they have yet certain obscure ones, and apply themselves to the false Representation wherewith their Imaginations are filled, taking them for true and real, not thinking, whilst they sleep, that there can be any other Objects more real and more solid. Likewise those who are asleep according to the Spirit, being deprived of the sight of Objects which may truly be called real, do for all that please themselves with temporal things, which have much less reality in comparison of spiritual Objects, than the vain and false Representations, which compose our Dreams, have in comparison of the
outward

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outward Objects they represent to us.

By this 'tis clear, that to watch is to have the Eyes of the Spirit open to spiritual Light, which discovers to us the Objects of the other Life, that is to say, God, Hell, Heaven, and Eternity, the Use we ought to make of Creatures to be saved, the Use the Devil makes of them to damn us, the Ends God hath in giving us them, the Designs of the Devil in representing them to us, the Obligations they put us in of praising, thanking, and praying to God.

Now as those who watch have not the Eyes only open to discover the Objects which are represented, but also the Ears to hear what can be said to them; Watching, according to the Spirit, is also to have the Ears of the Heart attentive to the Voice of God, to hear all he says to us by himself, by his Creatures, and by all Objects, as well Spiritual as Temporal, which our Capacity is able to conceive. For God speaks to us by all things, and there is nothing but our deafness which hinders us from hearing. This is the Idea we ought to have of Christian Vigilance. Let us now proceed to the Practice and the Profit of it, in the Sequel of this Treatise.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

How profitable it is to have often in our Minds the remembrance of God. Fundamental Reasons about the Usefulness of this Practice.

Spiritual Light, which, as we have said, distinguisheth those who watch from those who do not, being nothing else but God himself, as *St. Austin* saith very often after the Scripture; all those who follow it have in some sort God present, and practice so what God ordered to *Abraham*, in these Words, *Ambula coram me, & esto perfectus.*

But besides this presence of God more general, and which is included in all the Prospects and all the Knowledges which God's Light gives us, there is one more particular and express, by which the Spirit knows God more distinctly, looks upon him as God, endeavours to render him Homage, Adoration, and the Worship which is due to him. This presence of God is only that continual remembrance of God which the holy Fathers, who have given Rules of Christian Life, recommend unto us as the only Means to
live

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live in Piety. We must, saith St. Basil, watch for the guard of our heart with all sort of diligence, and not suffer the remembrance of God, which ought to be continually in us, to be blotted out of our minds. We must always have the Idea of God imprinted as an indelible Character in our Souls. 'Tis by this means that we obtain ordinarily that Charity which will excite us to observe the Commandments, and which is conserved by observing them. S. Basil. Reg. fus. disp. int. 5. See Reg. Brevior. 21, 29, & 306.

St. Gregory of Nazianze (Orat. 33. p. 531.) does not speak less vigorously of the usefulness of this Practice: It ought to be to us, saith he, as frequent a thing to be mindful of God, as to breathe: Or rather, it ought to be our only Occupation. 'Tis our duty to think of God day and night; morning, and evening, and at mid-day; to bless and praise him at all times, going to bed and rising, walking, and in all our other Actions; thereby to purifie our Souls by this continual remembrance.

All the other Fathers speak the same Language; and there is no Counsel hath been proposed with more uniformity among all those who have given Rules of a Spiritual Life.

But

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But to comprehend even from the beginning the importance and necessity of this holy Practice, we must consider, that the first and most general of all the Temptations is that of forgetting God, because it springs from all the Objects of Sense, how innocent soever they may be.

For, the state wherein we live in this Life, is, that these Objects striking upon the Organs of the Body, force the Soul to apply her self to them, without being able to defend her self from them. They advertise themselves of their presence, and they have no need at all to be known, to be aided with an interior Reflexion which may excite the Idea of them. And as their Impressions are lively and continual, they sway the Soul to fill her self with them, and to forget every thing else.

But as by a publick and known institution, or by a natural relation, some of these Objects, besides the Idea of their Being which they form in the Mind, are yet tokens of divers motions of the love which we can easily conceive in others, because we feel them often in our selves. it happens from thence, for Example, that by receiving the impression

pression which the outward Man may make upon us, we conceive moreover the Idea of their thoughts, whether it be by their words, by the alteration of the countenances, or by other signs of institution. And so although those thoughts may be Spiritual, they agree nevertheless in that with Corporal Beings, that by the favour of some signs to which they are annexed, they enter into the Soul whether we will or no, and they procure her application.

Besides these outward Principles, which withdraw in some sort the Soul out of her self, she is yet violently carried thereunto by the disorder of her passions, by the propensity she hath to pleasures, and for all that flatters her Ambition and Pride; by the indigency wherein she finds her self within her self, which she endeavours to replenish by outward means. Thus she is carried thereunto with vehemency, she follows with greediness the impressions she receives from Corporal things, she plunges her self thereinto headlong, and she gives them by her imagination a greatness, and a solidity which of themselves they have not.

'Tis

'Tis quite contrary with Spiritual things. What greatness and what reality soever they may have, they do not act at all by themselves upon our senses, nor admonish in this manner the Soul to think thereof. And though by the means of certain signs, the Soul may be sometimes warned thereof, nevertheless as we conceive them imperfectly, so the Ideas we have of them are very weak, and the impressions of Worldly things do continually attract the Soul, it follows from hence that almost all Men do live in the oblivion of God, and that even those who desire to be his, stand in need of a continual strength to uphold themselves from falling thereinto, and to withstand the impression of sensible things, which tend to apply the Soul to outward things, and to dissuade her from Spiritual Objects.

Thus howsoever we may be persuaded, speculatively, of the truth, reality, and the grandure of the Spiritual World, nevertheless we feel in our selves a weight and an inclination which sways and over-rules us from conceiving any other grandure, and almost any other being than that of those Objects which

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strike our senses. And what appears more strange, is, that even when we are overpowered and become inclined to busie our selves with Temporal things by Gods order, by the motive of his Grace, and the obedience which we owe him, and that we relate, first, to his Honour and Glory, the application which is given to these objects, the inclination which we have thereunto, blots out by little and little this first intention, and makes us cleave thereunto through a pleasure we take therein, in such a manner that these outward Employments though undertaken by Gods order, dissuade us insensibly from him, and fills us with Creatures; unless we use great endeavours to stop this impression.

Behold the principal temptations of this life, and the source of all the others, or rather 'tis a temptation which is universal, which is included in all particular temptations.

'Tis very visible by what has been said, that the most natural remedy against this general temptation, should be to render Spiritual things more present than they are; and to conceive them in a manner which might make us comprehend

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prehend their greatness better; to renew continually the thought of them in our Minds, and thereby to stifle that so violent impression which Corporal and transitory things make therein. But as these Spiritual Objects do not present themselves of themselves, and that the connexion they have with Corporal things is not sensible, the Soul must be supplied thereby, by all possible means she can find out.

These means are reduced to two, a general and a particular one. The first is, to force and compel the Mind by a strong and lively Will to apply it self to God, and to withdraw it self as it were by force from the sight of Creatures, to fix it to that of Spiritual Objects.

The Second is, to act in such a sort by a holy industry, that all the Objects which environ us, and which strike our senses, may renew therein the Idea of God, and make us remember what he is, and what we owe him.

To be prevalent in this last means, which involves the practices of the first, we must endeavour to imprint lively in our Minds the diverse relations that outward Objects have with God, and

to enchain these Ideas together, that the things of this World may never present themselves to us, without stirring up those of God in us.

There is no need to bring this about, of inventing arbitrary contracts. There is no more but to see what it is. That is to say, but to conceive, that God replenisheth, upholds, moves, and guides the visible World; that he speaks to us by all Creatures; that he is the only and inviolable rule of our actions; and that 'tis he alone can defend us from the temptations which these cause in us, and bring upon us; and accustom us thus to see Creatures no more, without seeing at the same time in them and by them, that to which they have so intimate and so essential a relation.

CHAP. III.

The first manner how to keep our selves in the presence of God, drawn from the dependence of the being of Creatures on God

THE qualities of Creatures may be different, and so have diverse relations

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lations with God ; but as they all agree in the being , they have all, by this being which they have received and do receive continually from God, an intimate connexion with him, through the dependence they have thereon.

Thus every Creature by its Being ought to put us in Mind of God, and is a natural sign thereof. But to imprint this truth more lively in our Minds, it is good to consider, that all Bodies which strike our senses, which appear to have so much Splendour and Beauty, which we take almost for real Beings which are in the World, there being only these beings which advertise us that they are there, do nevertheless participate of being but in a very imperfect manner. They have not in them the cause of their subsistence. If the Almighty hand which hath created them, did not maintain them, and draw them continually from their nothingness, they would fall again into nothing at every turn, only because he would cease to give them their Being. And this same Being which they receive is so limited in every thing, that it relies much more of its nothing than of its Being, since we perceive therein

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an infinite want of all perfections which they have not. Being moreover destitute of intelligence, they are in respect of themselves as if they were not ; and if they are for us, they are not for themselves.

If from Bodies we pass to created Spirits, we shall find there the same deficiency of subsisting by themselves, and the same necessity of receiving continually a Being from the hand of God. 'Tis true, they have not the defect of not knowing themselves, and their knowledge doth extend it self to some Objects ; but the boundaries are so strait, that what they know is almost nothing in comparison of what they know not.

The imperfection of the Being of Creatures, ought to serve us as a step to conceive, besides these material Beings and these limited Spirits, that there is an immaterial Being unlimited, which is the source of every Being and every Knowledge ; which depends upon nothing, and whereon all depends ; which is immense, infinite, necessary, and all-powerful, which is great without quantity, good without quality, eternal without vicissitude of time ; which produceth all alterations

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rations without changing, which is always acting, yet always in quiet; which is every where, without being included in any thing; which is more intimate with us than we our selves, and which gives us without intermission, as *St. Paul saith*, Life, Motion, and Being.

This infinite Being is the God we adore. All Creatures point him out to us, seeing they come from him, and receive from him all they have. But as we are swayed by the weight of our Corruption to insist upon the effects, without considering of the allpowerful Cause which produceth them, and to fill our heads with the vain splendour of Creatures, forgettting the Sovereign Beauty from whence they borrow that little which they have; to withstand this miserable blindness, we ought to tell all Creatures which environ us, all that's Beautiful and Charming in the World; thou art not my God, 'tis not from thee we have our being, and that thou hast nothing but what is given thee by God, who is hidden in thee, and whom we do not see.

We ought to consider often God as an infinite Sea, which conserves all things; and our selves as Fishes, or ra-

that as Atoms which are engulfed therein, and whose Being disappears, in some sort, in the immensity of this Sovereign Being which swallows them.

If we were well accustomed to these thoughts, Creatures would be so far from making us unmindful of God, that they would place him continually before our Eyes. We should adore him without intermission by secret looks and motions. We should annihilate our selves in his presence, at the sight of his greatness and of our littleness. We should make use of all sensible Objects to renew to him our homages. As he is every where, we should find him every where, in Heaven, on Earth, and in Hell it self: *Si accendero in Cælum ut illic est, & si descendero in infernum ades.* in Ps. 130. The whole universe would represent to us the magnificence of his Glory, and it would be a Temple for us, which would excite us to make us observe the respect due to the greatness of him for whom it is consecrated. We should never imagin we are alone, when we should see our selves always in the presence of God, and all our Actions, and all our Thoughts, and all our motions exposed to his divine Eyes. Lastly, we should

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should at least endeavour to imitate the modesty, the reservedness, the respect, and the attention of those who are in the presence of Earthly Kings, and not dare to do, in the presence of God, any thing that may draw upon us his wrath, as we see no Body who would willingly do in the presence of Kings, what he knew disagreeable to them, and for which he might presently be punished.

There is nothing so common as these thoughts, but there is nothing more rare than the making a right use of them, and to make them serve to withdraw the Mind from the dissipation which the sight of the World may cause in it to hinder it from delivering it self to the objects of the sense, to compose the inward and the outward Man, and to be in a condition we would be in if God were visibly present.

This happens not because we seldom think of these truths, we conceive them, but weakly, and we are not livelily penetrated with them. 'Tis then what we ought to beg of God, and what we ought to labour for, by continual reflections which may be able to imprint them strongly in our Minds and Hearts.

CHAP. IV.

The second Manner how to keep our selves in the presence of God, which is to consider his Providence in all things.

FAith does not only discover to us God in the World, maintaining all his handyworks, and giving them continually a being, in quality of Creator; Faith makes us see him as Kinging his Kingdom, regulating and guiding even all smaller things with so absolute an Empire, and so invincible a force, that no Creature can withstand his orders, nor hinder it self from contributing whatsoever it can do, good or bad, to the execution of his Will.

This truth giving us leave to behold all things and all Creatures as instruments in the hands of God, gives us means consequently to raise our selves by this towards God, and to adore him as the true Author of all that happens in the World.

Goods and Evils are equally proper to renew this Idea. For God is the true Author of both.

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He is the Author of the good which we receive by the Ministry of the Creatures, it being he that appoints and procures them for us by an express order of his Will and Pleasure, without which the affection and good will of all Men together must necessarily be unuseful to us. And he is not less Author of the Evils which happen, it being his Justice that condemns us to them, and employs either Men, or some secondary causes, for the fulfilling this his Pleasure upon us.

We should then change our Language, or at least our thoughts; and in lieu of busying the Mind about Creatures, relating all, and attributing all unto them; it would be very just to raise our selves upon all occasions, to the true Cause of all these accidents, and to give to God in our thoughts that part which he hath effectively in all that happens in this World.

We should not then think at all that such a Man is dead by such or such an accident; that one was taken away by a Fever, another by the Plague; but we should look upon God in Mens deaths, as making use of these several

several means for the executing the Decree he has pronounced against them.

Likewise we should never say that we have lost our Wealth, through the injustice of another; but that God has made use of the malice of an Enemy to take away from us what we deserved to lose.

Be very circumspect, saith St. Austin, of relating your afflictions to any but to God. For the Devil himself cannot do you the least harm without his permission who possesseth the Sovereign power; and who makes use thereof either to punish or correct Men; to punish the Impious, to correct his Children. *Profrus*, saith St. Austin, in Ps. 32. *ad Deum refer flagellum tuum, quia nec Diabolus tibi aliquid facit, nisi ille permittat, qui desuper habet potestatem, aut ad poenam, aut ad disciplinam, ad poenam impiis, ad disciplinam Filiis.*

By this means we shall see God every where, and in all things, there being nothing but what is regulated by his providence, and what is wonderful, we shall see therein nothing in one sense but what's just, because nothing happens but by the order of his providence, which is always just.

Thus.

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Thus all Histories will be to us Histories of God, all Men Ministers of God, all Events Decrees of God, in which by consequence we shall never find any thing whereof we can justly complain.

Moral. Essays f. 1. tr. 2. 2. par. n. 16.

What Peace, what Submission, what Assurance ought not this truth to produce in our Minds? Ought we to fear being in a Vessel whereof God is the Pilot? Now this is what is in the World in regard of all Men. God conducts them to the end to which they are ordained, by infallible ways; and from whence none ever is diverted.

'Tis true, he inclines some, others he does not; because he is the Author of some Mens ways, and others he permits to walk in the ways they have chosen of themselves. But these permissions do not hinder us from adoring him, and submitting our selves to his orders less than the effects he produceth of himself, and where Creatures have less share, seeing that he makes use of them for the execution of his designs, and regulates and limits them in such a measure as is necessary to make them succeed.

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To the end that the consideration of the divine providence may produce in us this continual attention to God, whereof we are now speaking, we must not be contented to acknowledge and adore it in the great events, but as extending it self to all, and that there is not so small a chance which is not ordained by God, we must accustom our selves to honour this divine providence in all, and relate to it the smallest accidents which happen to us.

'Tis not then enough to say with *David*, in the great calumnies published against, and the great outrages done to us, that God has commanded those who dealt thus with us to use us so barbarously, and to calumniate us; that is to say, he has permitted it for our good; but we must say in the small inconveniences of this common life, that 'tis by the order of God that Men speak harshly and uncivilly to us, rail at us without a cause, that Friends neglect us, forget us, and cross us; that we be wearied with incommodious visits, and importun'd by unjust and unprofitable intreaties.

We ought likewise acknowledge this order of God in the least good turns
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we receive from Creatures; the least good success which happens to us or our Friends; in the least friendship done us; in the least accidents which shock or favour our desires; and lastly, we must acknowledge it in things whose good or evil we cannot discover, not forbearing to honour therein the admirableness of Gods Judgments, which sometimes fixeth the execution of his most important designs, to rencounters which seem casual and indifferent, and in which Humane prudence can discover neither advantage nor disadvantage.

By this means we shall conserve ourselves in a kind of continual praying, by seeing God act in all things, and adoring in all the conduct which it pleaseth him to keep over us and all Creatures.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Third Manner how to keep our selves in the presence of God, which to consider what all Creatures have from God, and above all Persons with whom we deal.

AS God has painted himself in all his Works, has dispersed the draughts and characters of his divine perfections, and has done it even with a design that we may make use thereof as steps to raise us up to him, 'tis to second his intentions, to observe in each Creature what it has from God, to acknowledge God in it, and by it to climb to the top of these perfections, which is God himself.

I will not speak here of the Image of the divinity which might be found in Creatures deprived of reason, although it might be just, having been so often employed by Scripture to set forth the divers Attributes of God, we make use of the relation they have thereunto, to excite in us the remembrance of what they represent.

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I shall content my self to explicate in what sort God may be seen and honoured by Men, and made use of to keep our selves in his presence, whereas oftentimes there is nothing dissuades us more from it than our commerce with Men, because they fill our Minds not only with the Image of their Body, but with the Ideas of their judgments and passions, which often produce the same in us.

All Men generally, as Men, do assist us to know God, as having engraven his Image in their Nature it self, as being all capable of possessing him, and as not knowing from any one that he is not of the number of the predestinated, we may look upon them all before hand as to be eternally transformed into God.

But besides this general quality which is common to all, we see and distinguish God in the diverse states of Mankind, by particular Characters which imprint a more lively Idea in us.

We may easily acknowledge them by these principles which Scripture furnisheth us with. Rom. 13. 1. *That all power comes from God.* Jo. 3. 17. *That Man can have nothing but what's given him from*

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from Heaven. Jac. 2. 17. That every excellent Grace, and every perfect Gift, comes from above, and descends from the Father of lights. 1. Cor. 3. 16. That we are the Temples of the Holy Ghost. Eph. 1. 12. That the Church is the Body of Jesus Christ: That what is done to the members of Jesus Christ, is done to Jesus Christ himself, Math. 25. 40.

By the help of these divine lights, God may be found and honoured in Kings, Princes, Magistrates, Ecclesiastical Superiors, and even in unjust and violent Men, because his power may be found there, where Men may be the Instruments and the Ministers, but yet never appertains or belongs to him. And therefore Judith acknowledged it in Holofernes, in telling him, That he had in him the power of God to chastise the Wicked: *Virtus Dei qua in te est ad eruditionem insipientiam*

When Riches are seen in Rich Mens hands, it may be imagined they are the Oeconomers and the distributors thereof, but never the Proprietors and the Masters; because the Dominion belongs always to God, who may take it from them, and give it to others when he pleaseth, by an inalienable right of his Sovereignty.

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Sovereignty. So in seeing them the Mind ought to be elevated to him who hath established them dispensators and disposers of these Goods, and who will make them render an account of their administration.

We do not only see God in the Wicked, by the share they may have in his Power, his Riches, and his other Gifts, which may be common to them with the good. Jesus Christ is also in them in many other ways. "He is
"in them, as an excellent Author
"saith, *Treatise of Piety*, to. 2. pag.
"321. to punish them in his wrath.
"And where is the Servant who trem-
"bles not when he sees his Master in
"wrath, and that he condemns to
"chains and even to death the wicked
"Servant, chiefly if he himself de-
"serve to be rebuked, and perceive
"himself guilty? He is in them to ac-
"complish his designs which we are
"ignorant of. And who will not have
"a regard to the secret orders of a
"Prince, when he sees all is altered,
"and knows not what he will do? He
"is in them to try us, and to know
"whether or no we are faithful to
"him. Who will not be watchful of
"himself

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“himself, and keep within the bounda-
“ries of modesty in this time of temp-
“tation? He is in us to advance us,
“because we stay too much, and because
“their commission moves us to make
“haste. And who shall dare to com-
“plain thereof, and will not rather en-
“deavour to recover the lost time?
“He is in us to cure us. And who
“ought not receive the remedy from
“God with Submission and Patience,
“without insisting upon the Rasor
“which cuts, which he must consider
“as an instrument of health, and ho-
“nour the hand that employs it? There
“are some who kiss the medicine which
“is given them, so well they receive
“it, in hopes they may have no more.
“He is in them, in fine, to recompense
“us; these are they who place the
“Crown upon our heads. Ought we
“to be offended then, if they do it a
“little rudely, seeing that thereby they
“augment our recompence?

But if God may be seen even in the
Wicked; how much more easily may
he be seen in the good, and those who
are just? “He is not in them only, he
“acts there, he speaks there. When
“the members of Jesus Christ are fill’d
“with

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“with his Spirit, he is there almost without any vail, and in a manner palpable, because he may be seen as it were with Eyes, being we know that ’tis he who acts in them all the good they do: *Domine dabis pacem nobis, omnia enim opera nostra operatus es in nobis*. Their sweetness is his sweetness, their patience is his. When they speak he regulates the motion of their Tongues. When they burn with Charity, ’tis he kindles it. He is their Charity and their Virtue.

Why then are we not careful to vary our motions towards God, according to the several Graces which we observe in the Souls of the just? And lastly, why does not the sight of all Christians excite in us the remembrance of Jesus Christ who is their head, who hath united them to his body, and who has made them his Brothers and Co-heirs? Are we not then very much to blame, if we should forget God, being he presents himself to us in so many fashions, and is every where before us, at all times and in all kind of conditions? “He presents himself to us, saith the abovesaid Author, in the great ones, “to astonish us. He presents himself “to

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“to us in the Poor, to shew compassi-
“on. He makes use of the aversion of
“those who love us not, to gain us more.
“He makes use of the occasion of Na-
“ture, and those who love us, to begin
“to make us love him. He shews him-
“self in unknown persons, and who are in-
“different to us, to the end that being
“without passion in what regards them,
“we may see him more easily, and
“that nothing may make us turn away
“from him. He is in all his Members,
“he is every where, that we may see
“him every where: And every where
“we shut our Eyes, that we may not
“see him.

We should then endeavour to look upon all those with whom we have any commerce, by some of these Characters, to help to raise us to God, and to beseech the favour from him to speak to them as we ought, and to hearken with more sweetness, docility, and respect to all they say to us, which would render all our conversations holy and edifying.

CHAP. VI.

The Fourth Manner of keeping our selves in the presence of God, which is to be attentive to the instructions he gives us as to all we see and hear in the World.

Christian vigilance does not only direct the Eyes of the Soul to Spiritual Objects, it opens also her Ears to the instructions God gives us. There are some which are in some sort heard through all the World, and they are those which aim directly at us, as advertisements which are given us by Preachers, or by those who are so charitable as to mind us of our Duties, and to make us know our faults. And the effect of Christian Vigilance, as to them, is, that it does not make us look upon them and receive them as coming from Men, but as from God by their Ministry, according to this undoubted principle in St. *Austin's* Divinity, That God is the only Master of truth, in what manner soever he makes us know it.

But

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But there are other instructions which God gives us, which are more hidden and harder to be understood, which are those the Scripture speaks of, saying that Wisdom cries from without, and her voice is heard in the Streets. *Sapientia foris predicat, & in plateis dat vocem suam. Prov. 1. 20.* These are those, say I, which are engraven in the passions, and in the common actions of Men, and in all the accidents which happen to them. God speaks by all this, and he speaks very lively, very vigorously, and very efficaciously, but 'tis to none but those who sleep not, who are attentive to his voice, and who desire to hear him. He does not only speak, but speaks continually, because there is nothing in the World that happens, which may not be proper to instruct a vertuous Man, who is vigilant of himself, and has a care to relate to his edification all he sees or learns.

As for example, what do we see in the World, but vices, or virtues; good or evil; prosperities, adversities; elevations, ruines; passions, wandrings? and what is there in all this whereby God speaks not to those who hearken to him?

He

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He exposes virtues to our sight to encline us to imitate them, to shew us how far we are from them, and to give us hopes to obtain them. And 'tis, as if he said: Behold what we must do, but do not do it. Behold what you ought to hope. *Cur non poteris quod iste & iste?* He shews us by the rarity of these virtues that Grace is rare, that we ought to beg it with zeal and perseverance, that we fear losing it; but not despair of obtaining it.

He instructs us by vices and sins, whereof he permits us to be spectators, with the corruption and weakness of Man. He shews us what we are of our selves, and the state and condition we ought to dread falling into.

He makes us see by the Goods of this World wherewith he enriches some, the nothingness and vanity of this Temporal felicity, by giving us means to consider the miseries which are annexed to them, and which serve as matter to the divine reflexions which the Holy Ghost made *Solomon* write in the Book of Ecclesiasticks. He discovers to us these prosperous People plunged into a disgust of their happiness, subjected under a thousand troubles and cares, and

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striving

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striving vainly to stop one felicity which escapes them every moment, and is always ready to finish.

He shows us the blindness it produceth, the aversion for truth which accompanies it, the by-ways wherein it engages, the hardness of the heart it causes, the entrance it gives to all sorts of vices, and the obstacles it puts to all means of Salvation.

So many miserable Men wherewith the World is full, and that strike upon our Eyes at every turn, should be to us according to the Gospel, so many Preachers of penance; seeing they give us occasion to make the same reflection that Jesus Christ made to the Jews touching the punishment of certain Galileans, and the death of those who were thrown down by the Tower of Silo. Luc. 13. 3. 5. *Think you, said he to them, that these Men were more faulty than other Men? They were in no manner so. If then you do not penance you shall all perish as well as they.* We should say thus to our selves, at the sight of so many who sigh under the weight of their miseries. Is it because we think our selves less culpable than they? What reason shall we have to be-

believe it? There is then no other way but penance which can make us avoid these dismal chastisements which the Justice of God reserves for sinners, and whereof these evils, which he exposes to our Eyes in this life, are only small and trivial beginnings.

God does not only tell us by Mens miseries, that 'tis thus that the proud deserve to be treated: That we have many other chastisements to fear in the time of his rigor, being he punisheth already Men so severely in the time of his mercy; but he tells us moreover that this World, fill'd with so many Evils, does not deserve to be loved; that 'tis a prodigious blindness to be fixed thereunto, being so miserable as it is, and not to make use of these inevitable miseries to procure eternal happiness.

What do so many dead say to us which we see every day, but that we ought to prepare our selves continually for this end, so near and so terrible; and that whereas our senses being struck with these Objects become thereby insensible by custom, our reason on the contrary ought to be so much more touched by how much more they are frequent, because it is admonisht there-

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by, that death threatens us every moment, and that all the World is surprized thereby.

But nothing can instruct us more than the reflexions which we may make upon the passions of Men, upon the clouds they produce in their Minds, which takes from them the sight of truths the most clear and sensible; upon the false lights, by which they seduce them, by letting them see only a part of what ought to serve as a foundation to their judgments; upon the activity they give them to arrive at their mark; upon the fatigues and evils they make them endure; upon the vanity for that they make them seek it with so much eagerness; upon the miseries, the troubles which they cause over and above, to those who abandon themselves thereunto; upon the torture and despairing which they produce, either when their Object escapes them, or when the heart is divided by divers contrary desires.

And that is what permits us to see, as it were in a Picture, the holy blindness which the desire of being with God ought to produce in us, for all humane reasons which should be able to dissuade us

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us from it; the Zeal with which we ought to tend to this end; the activity with which we ought to embrace all the means which may conduct to it, the patience with which we ought to suffer all the ills which may be met with in this way, the solidity and incomparable greatness of the good to which we incline.

'Twould be a strange thing to observe in particular all the instructions which may be drawn from the commerce with Men, and the considerations of their Actions.

'Tis sufficient to say in general, that there is no Book which does furnish so great a number, nor so lively ones, and that the best Books consist almost only in the reflexions which learned Men make concerning Mens conduct, and which we may make like them, if we were applyed thereto; that they are not drawn only from the example of Illustrious Persons, nor from great Actions, but from the meanest; that we may learn to know Men and our selves by the conduct of their Servants, by the discourse of Country-Men, Artificers, Men, Women, and of the smallest and the most limited Wits.

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But

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But to the end that these reflexions may be truly useful to us, and serve us to keep our selves in the presence of God, we must look upon them as coming from God, who is the Doctor of all truth, as *St Austin saith*, and who discovers it to us by his light, that is so say by himself, and in himself; we must beseech him at the same time to grave them in the Heart, to do us the favour that we may make use of them for our guide, and to free us from the faults which he makes us to take notice of, to make us firm in the truths he discovers to us, to put them into our Minds and Hearts, when he shall present any occasion to practise them, and not to permit that they be stifled nor obscur'd by our passions.

We should only be faithful in this practice, to conjoyn the offices of *Martins* and *Mary*, to be always at the feet of Jesus, when we are most employed about outward things, to be able to say truly that we hearken to God at the same time we give ear to Men, seeing that we shall in some sort understand only the voice of God in that of Men, and only see God in them.

It is true, that what God says thus of Men, is often very far from the immediate sense of their Words. As for example, when they entertain us with vain and frivolous discourses, God tells us by these same discourses what *David* said by these words: *Ps. 118. The Fables which the Wicked relate to me, are far from the solidity of your Law.* But that does not hinder but that these Words from Men may be the means God makes use of to make us understand this truth, and that may help us to apply our selves to God, and to pray to him, provided that in understanding them, we be attentive to the inward light which teacheth us to Judge of them according to truth, and which is the voice whereby he makes himself understood by us.

CHAP. VII.

The Fifth Manner, which is to consult the eternal Truth upon each Action of the day.

BUT among all the several Manners of keeping our selves in the presence of God, there is not any more necessary

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necessary than this, which consists in consulting him continually about all that's presented to our thoughts, and principally about our Actions, as the eternal and unchangable Rule by which we ought to Judge of them.

'Tis in this that St. *Austin* makes the Idea of the Wise man to consist, whereof he speaks in the Third Book of the Trinity, and of which he saith, *That consulting the Law of God about all his Actions, he did not any one but what he saw in this truth ought to be done.*

'Tis wherein St. *Bernard* placeth the first Degree of Contemplation, which doubtless is the most necessary, and the least subject to illusion. *Ber. Ser. 5. de Diver. n. 5. Primus contemplationis gradus est ut incessanter consideremus, quid velit Dominus, quid placeat ei, quid acceptum sit coram ipso.*

And St. *Basil* in his great Rules, sheweth, that 'tis the principal means to live Christian-like, to conserve in his Mind the remembrance of God, and to observe what *David* saith. *I had my Lord God continually before my Eyes. Regul. fusius, disp. inter. 5.*

But to comprehend the necessity of this means, and the method of practicing

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sing it, we must know that being obliged by many titles, to do nothing but what tends to God, to Judge of things as God Judges of them, to have the sentiments he commands us to have for them; this relation of our Actions to God, and this conformity of our opinions to his truth, consists not in barren desires, nor in ineffective Oblations, nor in imaginary directions of the intentions, but to do nothing but only because God orders us to do it, and effectively to rule our opinions and motions according to his Truth and Justice.

But as this Justice and this Truth are not always known to us; as the Characters which were engraven in Mans heart have been disturb'd and half blotted out by sin, and as thus it has been very hard to consult them in many affairs; God who cannot dispense with Men from living according to his Truth, which is their essential and unchangable Rule, hath been pleased to facilitate a means to them to follow it, to cause his Laws to be written in the Scriptures, and principally in the New Testament; to the end that by reading them he might be able to imprint them in their Minds.

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So to advise with God concerning our Actions, is only to consult the Rules of the Gospel, to acquit our selves in all occurrences of what God commands us therein. For it cannot be imagined, that there is any time where it is absolutely free to live according to ones fancy, and which is not regulated by by some Laws: and if a Pagan hath said well in following Natural Reason, *That there is always some duty to be accomplished in all parts of our lives. Nulla pars vita vacare officio potest.* It may a great deal better be said in following the Rules of Christian Religion:

Even when we are swayed to use some indulgences which God permits, we ought not to incline thereunto only because God permits it, but because we are feeble, and have not force to aspire to the pitch of Evangelical counsels. And so we ought always to consult Gods Laws, that in what sort soever we act, it may be Truth and Charity which guides us, and not our sensuality and our capriciousness.

It is true, we are often obliged to obey Human Laws and Customs established by Mens fancies, and so to practise several things, which being in-
different

different in themselves, are only prescribed us by positive Precepts, which have an uncertain and a variable Truth; But the obligation of obeying these Laws comes not to us from these Laws themselves; it comes from a Superior Law, that is from an eternal Law, which makes us subject to Human Laws, with certain conditions; so that when we observe them with such a Spirit as we ought, we obey Gods Justice effectively, when we seem only to obey Men.

The principal exercise of a Christian, who is disposed to pass a day Christian-like, is to foresee as much as he can all the Actions he ought to do, to regulate them by the Maxims of the Gospel, and not to be swayed, but to observe these divine Laws. But 'tis not sufficient to consult them once a day, we must renew this duty towards the Law of God, at least in all the Actions which depend upon some new Rule, on which we have not made one express reflexion.

So we ought to form no new design, nor enter upon any proposition, nor having consulted the rule of our duty, and beg'd the Grace of God to know
what

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what we ought to do in this affair. And this ought not to be understood only of some great designs and important engagements which are very rare, but of all small engagements which present themselves, and all the small affairs wherein we have any part.

We should not, for example, ever make visits, having not consulted whether they are in the order of our duty, and whether there be any reason of Charity or Justice which engages us thereunto. We should never read any Book, never write any Letters without this reflexion. We should never give, buy, or receive any thing. Likewise we should say nothing, but examine at the same time, whether what we say be good for any thing, and whether it be conform to the Laws which God has given us to guide our selves, our actions, and our words by.

But there are many more things to be considered in this examen, not to be deceived therein, and to be able to assure our selves, that our Actions are conform to their rules.

We must not only consider how things must be done, but whether they ought so to be done. And to examin this point, we must not have regard only to the justice.

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justice and to the goodness of the things in themselves, but to the particular duty that engages us thereto. God does not demand all sort of good at the same time, nor from all sorts of persons; and there are no Persons who ought not as well to think of performing the duty of their States and Conditions, as of freeing themselves from the State which obliges them to these duties.

Although it may seem that this examen, before it be made with mature deliberation, cannot have place in the course of the occupations of a days labour, yet it is not so hard a thing as we would believe.

For either he who examines whether he ought to incline to some Action in relation to his condition, is assured before hand, as much as is possible for him, by a serious examination, whether he is in the Employment and State wherein God would have him; or he is convinced he is not, or else he has reason to doubt of it.

If he be assured that he is, it is easie for him to judge of most things, whether the Action which presents it self be conform thereto. If he be convinced that he is not, he ought to repent presently.

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sently for the rashness of his engaging, and resolve with himself to leave that state if it may be left, and examin afterwards whether the Action ought to be done by a person ill entred and engaged in this condition. For there are some conditions which ought never be undertaken, and others which may be, by expecting till they may forsake the Employ.

A Priest, for example, ought to quit the Administration of the Sacraments, except in case of absolute necessity, from the very moment he is convinced that he is ill entred, and that the fault of his vocation is not repaired.

On the contrary, a Religious who hath an ill vocation ought to fulfil the obligations of his condition, what fault soever there may be in his entrance. And it is the same with Married Persons.

We ought to Judge almost in the same manner of him who should doubt, whether his vocation be good or not, as of those who are assured that 'tis bad. For there are things which ought to be done by expecting till they can be examined, and others which ought to be let alone just after this examen; and

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and often this determination is no hard thing.

It is then true, as has been said elsewhere, *Moral. Essay, t. 1. tr. 2. 2. p. n. 37.* That in what State soever a Man may be, in what bad Employment he may be entred, in what time and what moment he may make reflexions upon himself, and acknowledge his misfortune, there is always a way whereby to return to God, who begins this State and this Moment, which is terminated in Heaven: that is, that there are a sequel of Duties and Actions which the Divine Wisdom prescribes him to bring himself out of this state. And what he is obliged to do so soon as he knows it, is to practise this duty which is the nearest to him and which begins this way. When he shall have satisfied it, he ought to search for the Will of God, concerning what he ought to do the next hour, and practise it faithfully; and by Acting thus he will infallibly return to God.

But when the examination of vocation of the state wherein one is, hath been made with a great caution, it is not necessary to reiterate it every Moment, and therefore those who have an assurance

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assurance of being in the place where God would have them, are obliged only to examine the things which are presented, and on which they may deliberate.

They ought to Judge of them as has been said, by consulting the Rule. But 'tis not enough that they see in this Rule that the things are good in themselves, nor in relation to their state and condition. It is necessary that they see therein, that they be good in relation to their inward disposition, and to all their other duties.

For there are a great quantity of good Actions, which being not necessarily fixed, or having no connexion with our duties, though they are not contrary, should not be undertaken, because they surpass the force of our virtue; because they excel, because they expose us too much, and engage us to a too great dissipation.

There be others in regard of which we must expect Gods time, which is not always ready, as Jesus Christ teacheth us in the Gospel.

Likewise there are some Actions of duty, which cease being so, because they hinder satisfying some more important

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portant duty. And it's this which often causes some doubts and troubles to the greatest Saints, who having in the heart a desire of following Gods pleasure in all things, are sometimes hindered from discerning what are the Actions they ought to prefer.

Saint *Austin*, *Epist. 65.* expresses this difficulty in one of his Letters to Saint *Paulinus*: 'Tis, saith he, an intricate and troublesome business wherein I often find my self, and which causes my disturbance, in which it is very hard not to commit faults. Sometimes we are unwilling to forsake the Action which we have proposed to our selves. However though not bad in it self, it oftentimes becomes so, as hindring us from performing some more great and pressing necessitie which presents it self, and which should make us leave what we are doing. How hard a thing it is never to be deceived upon these occasions, and how we experience thereby the truth of these words of the Prophet? Who is he who comprehends the number of his faults? *Hic omnino non falli difficile est. Hic omnino vox Prophetica praevalet; delicta quis intelligit?*

The reason of this, he says, is, that 'tis neither by Heavenly voices, nor by
Prophets,

Prophets, nor by Revelations and Extasies, but by Events that we are advertised that our designs and resolutions are not conform to the will of God. *We have for example, saith he, sometimes a design to make a Voyage: And yet in consulting Truth, there happens a thing which we think ought not to be forsaken. Or on the contrary we would willingly be at quiet, when truth obliges us to make a Voyage against our inclinations. And as these chances are often and frequent, and trouble those who seek God, St. Austin desires Saint Paulinus to impart his thoughts upon this Subject to him, and to tell him how one ought to govern himself in the like occasions.*

He observes yet the same trouble and perplexity in his Book concerning the Catechising those who are not well instructed, and he teacheth at the same time in an admirable manner the Rule we ought to follow in these occurrences.

We ought, saith he, to regulate and dispose by our light the consequence of the Actions which we ought to do, and if we can observe this order, we ought to be glad, not that we have done what we would have done, but that we have cause to believe that

we have done what God hath commanded. But if there happen some necessity which obliges us to disturb this order, let us be flexible, and ply rather than break, by taking for our order that which God shall have preferred. For it is much more just to be conformable to his will, than to desire that he should conform to ours. When he is busied in chusing an order in our Actions, is it not reasonable, that what is most excellent be esteemed before what is not so? Wherefore then do we complain, that God who surpasses us so much in goodness and excellence, be esteemed above us? And why would we be disorderly, to conserve our Rule?

But not being forced by any particular necessity, this ought to be a reason to prefer one employment before another, because it is prescribed us in the regulating our days work, as having this advantage over another, that by preferring it, we avoid inconstancy, disorder, and variation, and so we have cause to believe that we act after a more conformable manner to the will of God, whereunto all works are ordained.

'Tis this has made St. *Austin* establish this important Principle; which is the
ground

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ground of all order which is observed in well governed Societies, and even among all those who would live orderly. *Aug. de oper. Mon. c. 13. The best Government, is that all daily occupations be distributed in a certain order, and assigned to certain times, that they may not trouble the Mind by their confusion and disorder. Ea est optima gubernatio, ut omnia suis temporibus distributa ex ordine gerantur, ne animum humanum turbulentis implicationibus involuta perturbent.*

But it is not sufficient to cast an Eye upon the Law of God, to regulate the body of actions, and to decide whether we ought to incline thereunto or no; we must consult it also to learn thereby with what Spirit they ought to be done, what dispositions they demand, that we may endeavour in doing them, to enter into these dispositions.

If, for example, we entertain a Person who hath need to be gently spoken unto, with reservedness, and in a serious and edifying manner; who cannot endure to be jested withal, who is vexed at too free censures, although true and solid, we must first consult the Rule of Charity which prescribes these devoirs to us, pray to God that he may
make

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make us capable of observing them.

Each occupation of this life has its Rules and Dispositions. They ought to be every one animated with a certain Spirit, and 'tis truth which instructs us with them. We must then consult truth without intermission, and look upon it as the model and original which we ought to copy out and represent by our Actions.

But as we are not only applyed to our selves, but also spectators of other mens Actions, and of what happens to them, which cannot be done without forming divers Judgments, and having different motions upon their score, we must still govern them by truth and Justice, because they are not less capable of being true or false, just or unjust, since they purifie the Soul if they are equitable, and defile it if they be not so; and appearing often outwardly, they are ordinarily the source of scandal, or of the edification which we cause.

We should for this reason accustom our selves to Judge all things according to truth, and suffer nothing in us but the motions which truth produceth, to make nothing appear outwardly but the
Judgmen

Judgments and Motives which are governed on truth. And for this end it is necessary to know it, and as much as is possible not to let it go out of sight, that we may avoid those illusions which Worldly things cause, when we behold them not in relation to this Rule

To practise perfectly this Rule, is to be truly wise, and St. Bernard had no other Idea of it: *In Cant. Ser. 30. n. 8.*
 “ Give me, *said he*, a Man who loves
 “ God with all his heart, and who pre-
 “ fers him above all things, who loves
 “ himself and his Neighbours, because
 “ they love God; and who loves his
 “ Enemies, because they are capable to
 “ love him, whose heart is inclined to-
 “ wards his near kinsfolks, with a more
 “ tender affection, by reason of a tie of
 “ Nature; towards those who have in-
 “ structed him according to the Spirit,
 “ with a more abundant affection, by rea-
 “ son of the excellence of Grace he hath
 “ received by their means; who embrac-
 “ eth thus, with a love *regulated by truth*,
 “ all other Objects of Charity; who
 “ contemns the Earth; who hath his
 “ Eyes lifted up towards Heaven; who
 “ makes use of this World as if he used
 “ it not at all, and who distinguisheth by
 “ a

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“a certain inward taste the Objects
“which he must enjoy from those
“which he must only use; who applies
“himself to transitory things only tran-
“sitorily, as he ought, in considerati-
“on that he must do so. But who is
“linked to Eternal things by a firm
“and an Eternal love? Give me, *say I,*
“a Man who hath these dispositions, and
“I shall make no scruple of calling him
“wise, because he tasteth every thing
“according as it is, and may say of
“himself, with truth and security, *that*
“*God hath ordered and given him Cha-*
“*rity.* But where shall we find this
“Man; and when shall we be in this
“disposition? I tell you this with tears
“in my Eyes. How long will this hap-
“py state be known to us but by an in-
“constant order, which comes to us as
“from far, without being able to taste
“it effectively? We see our Country as
“it were at a distance, but we do not
“possess it. O truth, Country of the
“exiled, and the end of their exile, I
“see thee, but I cannot enter, being
“with-held by the Flesh; I am not wor-
“thy to be admitted into thy bosom,
“being polluted with sin: O *veritas*
“*Exulum patria, exilii finis! Video te, sed*
“*intrare*

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*“intrare non sinor, carne retentus, sed nec
“dignus admitti peccatis sordens.*

We see with what ardor St. Bernard sighed after this state, and this ardor it self with which he desired it, ought to make us Judge that he made his piety to consist in continual Vigilance, to the end he might not suffer any motions in himself, nor any sentiments which should not be conform to the order of Charity which is prescribed us by the Laws of God.

It is very true, that 'tis impossible during our abode upon Earth to have always reasonable thoughts and just motives, seeing that concupiscence, which lives always in us, being excited by Objects, will not cease producing ill desires and wicked thoughts.

But if we cannot hinder our selves from feeling them, we may at least condemn and disapprove them as soon as we feel them, and stop this tumult within us, without shewing it outwardly. 'Tis what truth orders us when we are thus agitated by some passions which we condemn. And we must not fear that there is any hypocrisie in shewing in this manner nothing but Peace and Tranquillity, when we are inwardly agitated

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agitated and troubled. For 'tis Christian prudence that prescribes us this artifice; seeing there is no better means, as St. *Austin* says, in *Pf. 75. p. 138.* to teach Concupiscence not to rise any more, than to shew that it riseth unprofitably and in vain: *Discat non surgere; quia frustra surrexit.*

It is not sufficient to be attentive to truth at the beginning of each Action, each Employ, and of each Enterprize; but even in the pursuance of those which continue any time: we must observe them from time to time, to see that we do not sequester our selves from it. For 'tis but too frequent to be engaged presently in certain Actions through a motive of pleasing God, and to fix our selves thereunto afterwards without any relation to God, either through the pleasure we meet therein, or through some Humane advantages which we find there. We begin by Charity, and we continue through Cupidity; so much cunning has the Devil to substitute the Creature in the place of the Creator, without our taking notice, of the alteration; which can hardly be avoided but by often reflecting of the manner how we conduct our selves in the sequel of our Actions.

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In fine, as St. Gregory the great recommends oftentimes, (*vide Gr. in lor. in Job. l. 1. c. 8. and 17. c. 19. and 9. c. 10. and l. 12. c. 15.*) if it be necessary to watch thus over our Actions before we do them, and whilst we do them, it is no less necessary, after they are done, to make a small Examen touching the method how we have discharged our selves of our duty to God; which obliges us to an humble acknowledgment of the faults we have committed, and sentiments of recognition, if God has done us the favour to surmount thereby some tentation. And so by consecrating to God by several means, the beginning, the middle, and the end of our Actions, all our whole life, which is only a series of these Actions, will be consecrated to him.

But to prevent these scruples which may arise in those, who having a great desire to act nothing which may be contrary to Gods Will, would urge too far what is in this Chapter about the Examen which ought to be made of these Actions before the doing them; it is good to add here an advice of St. Francis Sales, which takes away the excess. 'Tis, that we ought not to amuse our selves
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in respect of small Actions, which are of no importance, to discern exactly whether they be more conform to the Will of God than others, when it does not appear manifestly.

“I advise you (*saieth he to his Theo-*
“*time, lib. 8 of the love of God; c. 14*)
“of a troublesome tentation, which of-
“ten happens to Souls who have a
“great desire to follow in all things
“what is most according to the will of
“God. For the Enemy in all occur-
“rences makes them doubt, whether
“it is the will of God, that they do
“one thing rather than another; as for
“example, whether it be the will of
“God that they eat with a Friend, or
“that they do not; whether they take
“for their Garments White or Black,
“whether they fast Friday or Saturday,
“whether they follow their Recreati-
“ons or not, in which they waste much
“time. And whilst they are busied and
“puzzled in discerning what is best, they
“unprofitably lose the occasion of doing
“many good things, the execution of
“which would be more to Gods Glory,
“than distinguishing of good and ill, for
“which they are so amased, would be.
“We are not accustomed to weigh

"small Money, but only pieces of im-
 "portance. Trade would be too trou-
 "blesome, and would waste too much
 "time, if we were forced to weigh
 "pence; and half pence, and such like.
 "So that we ought not to weigh all
 "sorts of small Actions, to know whe-
 "ther they be better than others. And
 "even there is very often superstition
 "in making this Examen. For, to what
 "purpose shall we make a difficulty
 "whether it be better to hear Mass in
 "one Church than another, to make a
 "Net or to Sew, to give Alms to a
 "Man or to a Woman?

It is then sufficient when these kind
 of doubts present themselves, to cast
 an Eye lightly upon the Rule; and
 when it gives us no light, it is better to
 determine than to amuse ones self, to
 deliberate unprofitably.

'Tis true, that in proportion as Gods
 light encreases in the Soul, it finds some
 more curious and delicate differences
 betwixt Actions which appear equally
 good to persons less understanding. But
 as it is just to follow this light when
 we have it, we must not be torment-
 when we have it not, what is most con-
 formable to Gods will in these small
 Actions.

CHAP. VIII.

The Sixth Manner how to keep our selves in the presence of God, which is to open our Eyes to exterior tentations, to which we are exposed, and to have continually recourse to God to be preserved from them.

THE Vigilance which Jesus Christ prescribes to us in the Gospel, does not only shew us God as our Rule; it shews us him as our only refuge and our only protector in all perils which environ us; and at the same time lets us see those perils, that is to say, the tentations which attaque us, and put us in danger of losing the life of the Soul.

If Vigilance discover to us God acting in all Creatures, and instructing us by them; it also discovers to us the Devil, employing all Creatures against us. For there is not one which he makes not use of sometime to deceive us, to poison us, to enflame our passions, to fix us to Worldly things, and to draw us from God.

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Philosophers desire that we should be prepared for accidents, because they may all happen; but we have a motive much more powerful, to 'prepare our selves against tentations, which is, that they certainly happen: *In hoc positi sumus.* For we have an irreconcilable Enemy, and the order of God it self is, that Men be tried by tentation: Which made the wise Man say, *Eccl. 12. v. 1.* that in entring into the Service of God, we must remain constant in Justice and Fear, and prepare the Soul for tentation.

We ought then in preparing our selves in the Morning for the Actions of the Day, to have in our thoughts that we shall be tempted, that the Devil will set upon us in divers manners; which ought to fill us with sentiments of fear. For who would not fear going into a Town troubled and infected with the Plague, where he must expect every moment to be seised with that pestilential disease? who would not be seised with fear, when sitting at a Table, where he could not forbear eating, and where nevertheless the most part of the Meat should be poisoned? And lastly, who would not be affrighted, walking in the dark, in a place full of Snares and Precipices?

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precipices? What care ought to be had to free ones self from these Dangers? Yet this is the state we are daily in, opening the Eyes to Worldly Objects, and entring into commerce with Men. The Devil hides himself in all Creatures; he arms them all against us; he endeavours to breath his poison into all our senses; he pierces us on all sides with a thousand enflamed darts, as the Apostle saith; he sets a thousand traps for us; he opens a thousand precipices for us. We have but one single way to avoid all these dangers, which is to run continually and have recourse to God, to obtain his assistance: And nevertheless our blindness is so great, that 'tis what we think least of.

If the Governor of a place of importance, knowing that 'tis besieged with an Enemy, who thinks of nothing but surprising him, and that he cannot be surprised but he must lose his life, should nevertheless leave all the Gates open, and think of nothing but to divert himself, might he not very reasonably be taken for a Mad Man? But how much more are we Mad, who knowing by faith, that the Devil goes round about us to get possession of our hearts, that

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he is stronger than we are, and that he endeavours only to cast us away eternally, we nevertheless think thereon so little, that this thought makes the least of our troubles and unquietness?

'Tis a strange thing, said a very devout Man, that the Devil prays God in some sort to abandon Men to him; *Expectavit Sathanas ut cribraret vos sicut triticum*, and that Men dream of all things but praying God to be their safeguard against so powerful an Enemy, and being careful to avoid the Snares he lays for them.

This negligence is so much more pernicious, by how much the principal means of not falling under these temptations is to know them, to prepare against them, and to have recourse to God. He commands us to discover them by Vigilance, and that this Vigilance incline us to prayer; *Vigilate & Orate*. And as we are always attacked in some place, and always in danger of being overcome, it follows, that our Vigilance and Prayers ought to be continual.

There are so many sorts, that 'tis impossible to describe them all. But generally speaking, there are some that Men are exposed to in all states and conditions,

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conditions, and others which arise from a particular state, wherein each one finds himself. There are some which are very rare, and others which are very frequent. There are some which are favoured by our inclinations, and others we have no propensity to. There are some gross and visible, others cunning and hidden. There are some which have great and long consequences, and others which are less important and more transitory.

Seeing that we must resist all these tentations, it is necessary to be attentive thereunto; but to the end we may make use of this tentation to keep our selves in the presence of God, we must apply our selves to those we meet withal in our exercises and in the course of our Actions.

This application will make us discover an infinite of them, which escape from those who think not of them, and we shall be surpris'd at the number of those which are met with in the most innocent Occupations. We shall find, for example, That the converse we have even with orderly Persons, is full of them; we are tempted there to expose our selves too much, to cleave too much to them; to forget God by this means; to be out of possession of

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the Soul; to say unadvisedly something to her advantage to get their praises. We are thereby tempted with impatience, if it happen that we are not of their opinion; with arogancy, if we think we have some advantage over them; with rudeness and bitterness, if they have something that's troublesome; with flattery, if we have interest to please them; with curiosity to know things, either unuseful to us, or that they would not have us to know; with scoffing, if they appear ridiculous to us upon some score. We are tempted with spite and indignation, if any thing be said which touches the pride we are addicted to; with complacency, if Men approve of our Actions without our procuring it; with envy for speaking too much, if what we hear said form in our Minds divers thoughts. We are tempted to despise others, if we meet with any defect; or on the contrary, to imitate them in their defects, if we do not acknowledge them. We are tempted to embrace their passions, and to enter and follow their ways, which although good, is not perchance ours. We are tempted to side with a great many Judgments ill grounded, which are afterwards the source of rash discourses.

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All these temptations, and many others which the light of God might discover to us in our discourses with Men, do shew that 'tis a great rashness to enter into conversation with any one, whosoever it be, not having raised up our hearts to God to beg his succours, and that we cannot renew too often, in the pursuit of discourse, this attention towards God, to resist the temptations which happen.

Besides these temptations, which may be called *Action*, because they consist in the Actions and motions of the Soul, there are others which may be stiled *Omission*, which consist in omitting and neglecting the occasions which are presented of practising virtue in our Actions.

For to make use of the same example, If there be no converse where we are not tempted to commit many ill Actions, there is also none where we can do any good ones; wherefore the omission by consequence is ill.

God may be honoured by all those which we see, in the manner he is there; we may observe something there which may help us to correct our manners, and advance us in virtue; we may practise Humility by humbling our
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selves in regard of them, and by placing our selves in the lowest places, through a true and sincere sentiment. We may practice meekness, by bearing mildly the weakness which may be observed therein; Charity, by comforting them; Zeal, by reforming them; Patience, by suffering them; Goodness, by yielding to their just or indifferent desires. We may give ear to God, by hearkening to them with respect. We may profit by their virtues, in imitating them; by their defects, making use of them that we may avoid them, and praying for them.

'Tis a great misfortune to lose so many occasions of practising virtue, and to do all things without reflexion, by following our natural inclinations. For 'tis to deprive our selves of the means God hath given us to enrich our selves by, and we ought not to wonder after this if we be poor, seeing that passing through places full of riches, we do not vouchsafe to heap them up; nor if we remain meagre and starved, seeing that being in plenty of food and nourishment, we are careless of taking what's necessary for our sustenance.

We ought to consider two sorts of temptations, in all Employs, Exercises, ordinary;

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ordinary and extraordinary Occupations, which make up our lives ; as in eating, reading, praying, visiting, and in particular actions of our Vocation. And although oftentimes we dream not of them unless in a confused manner, yet this attention will suffice to make us avoid the most palpable and the most dangerous.

But in this general prospect which we ought to have of temptations which are met with in all Employ, the experience we have of our weakness, and of the faults into which we are accustomed to fall, does apply us generally to those which are most frequent to us, and which we have proposed to our selves to oppose. And thus in beginning these Actions we ought to renew the resolution we have made of resisting them, and the prayers we ought to have made to God, to obtain the Grace to overcome them ; and by this means our whole life will become a continual warfare against Vice, a continual praying, and a faithful execution of holy desires which God has inspired us with for our perfection.

One of the greatest profits of this practice, of seeing face to face in the things wherein we are obliged to deliberate.

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berate, the temptations which accompany them, is, that it gives us means to judge more advisedly of all, and to have above all things sentiments more conform to Truth and Faith.

For the greatest source of Errors whereinto we fall in our Judgments, is, that generally we do not observe the Objects, but as they are sensible, and in relation to what they have to our concupiscence, which being very ready and lively in its Actions, makes us presently discover therein all that flatters or incommodes it. Nevertheless 'tis not by this that we must judge of them; but by the relations they have to ours and to other Mens Salvation; that is to say, by the obstacles or the facility they attribute thereunto, there being nothing that's good which is not assisting to it, nor nothing that's bad but what's a hinderance.

We cannot therefore well judge of things without diving into the temptations which they produce, and the use the Devil makes thereof to destroy us, seeing that 'tis by these temptations that they serve as obstacles to our Salvation.

'Tis but practising this rule faithfully, to disarm in some sort the Devil,

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vii, being he only deceives those for the most part who are negligent of themselves, by shewing them the Goods of this life, because they have something that's attractive, and hiding what they have that's dangerous from them.

Who could desire, for example, great Fortunes, great Employs, and great Dignities, if they looked upon them in this manner, and considered those who are raised thereunto, as charged with an insupportable burthen, as obliged to walk in a straight path, and all environed with precipices, and as being in the miserable condition and necessity of being lost for ever, or offer to themselves much greater violences than other Men?

In this manner, this prospect would discover to us a new World, where all would be turned topsie-turvy, where the happy would appear miserable, and the miserable happy; mean People great, and great people mean; what afflicts us in the outward World, would comfort us in this, with this difference, that the afflictions and consolations which would arise from the consideration of this new World, would be more real and solid than.

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than those which are produced by the Objects we regard only outwardly, which is what we call here the exterior World.

Doubtless there is nothing can be more profitable to us than this consideration of all Worldly things, in relation to Eternal happiness or misery, provided that we would not stick there, but would make use thereof to raise us up to God by the several motives which this consideration ought to produce, sometimes beseeching him to assist those we shall look upon as exposed to these temptations; sometimes blessing him that he has delivered us from them; now, by considering the bent we have thereto, and by begging of God that he do not abandon us; now, by considering how much Men are deceived in their Judgments, for want of penetrating to the bottom of things, and crying out with the Prophet, *Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem & queritis mendacium.* And by these several means we shall find in all the Objects which we shall perceive by the senses, or which are presented to us by Mens discourses, wherewithall to keep our selves in the presence of God and

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to entertain our selves in continual Prayer.

CHAP. IX.

The Seventh Manner how to keep our selves in the presence of God, which is to be Vigilant over our inward temptations.

BUT if Christian Vigiltance ought to apply us, as we have shewn it does, to discover the temptations which outward Objects might cause in us, it ought yet to render us more attentive to those which spring from within us, that's to say, to the motives of our concupiscence which corrupt and spoil our Minds, which infect our Hearts, which draw oftentimes the consent of our Will, and which spreads it self in the end outwardly by means of our Words and Actions.

There is need of a continual Vigiltance, whether it be to hinder these ill effects, by correcting our thoughts, by putting a stop to our desires, and by refusing them the Ministry of the members of our bodies, as the Apostle ordains it us; or to condemn them when they

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they are arrived. For the defect of Vigilance causeth both the one and the other of these two evils. It suffers concupiscence to act, and it hides what it does ; because a Soul that watcheth not is often absolutely lost , she Acts in a manner like an Animal, she suffers her self to be carried away by Objects, and she is ruled by them.

To possess the Soul and the Heart, is properly the contrary virtue to this subjecting of a Soul to the Objects to which she applies her self. And to comprehend in what it consists, we need but consider what 'tis we call to be possessed of in relation to the World.

We say a Man enjoys himself when he sees himself Act, when nothing escapes him that he is not aware of, when he has all the regards he ought to have, when he is Master of his motions, and that he Rules them for that end which he proposed to himself.

So to enjoy ones self according to God, is to see himself Act, to be witness of his motions both inward and outward, and to regulate them by the sight of God. And, on the contrary, not to possess or enjoy ones self, is, either not to see ones self Act, or not to be

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be able to with-hold his motions.

Interest and violent passions cause both, in regard of the World, in those who love it. For 'tis a strange thing how much the desire of being advanced, and the fear of being hurt, renders them applicable to all; how circumspect they are in all their Actions and Words; even to what point they strive to break and master their humours.

But as Charity is often less active in good People, than cupidity in the Worldly, we often see them leave their station, to follow blindly some small and frivolous passions, and act without reflexion, by humor, and by a meer impression of Objects.

This is the fault Christian Vigilance ought to correct, by forcing the Mind to apply it self to what it does, placing before its Eyes the concerns it ought to have, by quitting its uncleannesses, by endeavouring to maintain the Soul in the same situation, by cutting away all inequalities of humors, and by endeavouring at least to sigh for all those which escape us.

And this is it Christian Vigilance cannot do, unless it hinder the Mind from abandoning it self, and delivering
it

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it self intirely over to the Objects which present themselves; and unless it divide its attention, so that it give a part thereof to the Action, and make use of the other to consider what passeth in it self; as if it had two Spirits, the one Acting, and the other Witness and Judge of its Actions.

It cannot be denied but that this reserve, as to one part of our attention, or rather this double attention, the one to the Objects of our Thoughts, of our Motions, of our Actions; the other to the Thoughts, Motions, and Actions themselves, must be troublesome, and that the inclination of the Soul must Act without so many reflections, by giving it self entirely to what is pleasing, and only avoiding the more gross faults which mind and advertise us of themselves.

But the pains we find therein, ariseth only for that we are but little concerned for what relates to God; because we have none at all when we are stirred a little violently, and all the respects we ought to have are then presented to the Mind. If, for example, we entertain any one in a place where we know we may be overheard by some considerable

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considerable person, we should not forbear to regulate our Words concerning what might please him, and have as much attention to the Judgments he should make of what we say, as to those of the Persons with whom we should discourse. We should then need only to be lively penetrated with the presence of God, to have no more trouble for this double attention, and it is very just that we suffer this trouble, as being an effect of our want of virtue.

But if the sight of the presence of God sways us naturally to a Vigilance of our selves, and makes the practice of it easie; a Vigilance of our selves inclines us also to keep our selves in the presence of God. For by discovering to us what passeth in us, the passions which arise thereby, the bad branches which our corruption puts forth daily, makes us prone to hasten to God; and to shew him our sores, to sigh before him for our miseries. So this sort of Vigilance is yet an excellent means of keeping our selves always in Gods presence by continual prayer, seeing that prayer consists chiefly, according to *St. Paul*, in a secret sighing and lamenting

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renting, which a Soul penetrated by
er misery sends to God, thereby to
eg her deliverance.

CHAP. X.

*particular means how to keep our selves
in the presence of God, by the exer-
cise of certain virtues, which may be
joynd to the most part of our Actions.*

AS mans Mind is so weak in this
life, that it hath need of some
ariety in its exercise, and objects to
hich it applies it self, it is good to
ropose divers means to keep our selves
tentive to God, that we may remedy
he distaste and laziness which the uni-
ormity of the same thoughts is ac-
ustomed to produce. I shall add then
et to those which I have already ex-
licated, other particular practises which
ay be joynd to all Actions, and keep
s always in the presence of God. Piety
ay make us invent divers sorts, and
propose these only as models of those
hich may be prescribed to us accord-
g to our different occasions.

For

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For example, we may, to practise Humility, add or joyn to all those, the acknowledgment of our unworthiness, grounded upon our double wretchedness, one of which comes by Nature, and the other by the condition of sinners. For this double nothingness making us deserve nothing, gives us reason in all times, and in all places, and upon all occasions, to confess to God that we are unworthy of all.

We may then acknowledge with Truth and Justice, that we are not worthy of his favours, neither interior nor exterior; that we do not deserve the assistance of Creatures, nor the honour which is given us, nor the friendship of honest Men; that we are unworthy that any one apply himself to us, or treat us otherwise than with scorn, disdain, and with outrage; that we are not deserving to see the light, nor to live; that all this may be taken from us, and we have not cause to pretend that God does us any injustice.

Thus we may joyn this confession to all that happens to us, and renew an hundred times a day, in the presence of God, the consideration of our unworthiness.

But

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But this protestation must be sincere, nor must we pretend, having done it, to complain of those who should treat us as we avow we deserve to be. If then we be unworthy, that there be an acknowledgement for us, as truth ought to make us confess, let us not complain at all that we had none. If we be not worthy to be esteemed, let us not think that we are injured because we are not esteemed.

We may likewise find means in all things to practice thanksgiving according to the Apostles precept; *In omnibus gratias agentes*. For there is no time wherein we do not receive some Grace and some benefit from God, either by himself, or by his Creatures; and in what sort soever we receive it, 'tis always just to give him thanks for it.

This thanksgiving is not only in what Men call Goods, but also what they call Ills, because these Ills, such as they are, are always much less than those which we deserve; and so they have more of the Sweetness and Mercy of God, than of his Rigor and Justice; and moreover, if we know how to make good use thereof, they would give us means to avoid great Ills, and to deserve great Goods.

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Goods. So that as this is our fault if we do not make good use of them, they cannot pass, as coming from God, but as Silver which he gives us to pay our debts; as seed which he grants us to convey to our Souls the fruits of justice; as materials, whereof he makes us a present, to build our selves an Eternal Mansion-house.

Likewise, if we would entertain our selves with the desire of a Heavenly life, and with a sighing that our exile ought to cause in us, there is nothing which might not be able to excite and renew these motions. For the Goods and Ills of this life, the Virtues and Vices therein, are equally proper. The Goods of the Earth make us conceive the greatness of Heavenly ones, making us conclude, that if what God gives to the wicked be so agreeable, what he reserves for the just ought to be so incomparably more. And the ills of the Earth incline us more directly to sigh after that life, where we shall enjoy a perfect Peace exempt from all sort of Ills. The virtues of this life being but as some drops which fall from the Eternal Justice, ought to make us desire to quench our thirst at the Fountain it self of this

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Justice: And lastly, the sins which we commit continually ought to make us hate this present life above all things, being we shall not be delivered, but in Heaven, from the corruption which produceth them.

What is there in this life that is not capable of renewing in us the Idea of Eternity, seeing that we see nothing therein which does not vanish and slide away, and that this vanishing of Worldly things ought to make them all as nothing to us, and encline us to fix our hearts on nothing that is changeable, insubstant, and not Eternal? *Averte animam a temporalibus, & cum mundatum convertere ad aeterna.*

It may also be said, that in what inward disposition God employs us in, provided that it be a little lively, it finds means to spread it self every where. So St. Bernard was continually excited by these Words: *Bernarde, ad quid venisti?* And he found there a source of fervour and zeal, which emboldened him in all his Actions.

Others likewise found in certain little Verses of Scripture, some motives of stirring up continually the love of God in them; and each ought to be careful

careful to chuse some which he should often repeat, and which should contain as it were an abridgment of his Prayers, and of the dispositions whereunto he should tend.

This is what is called Aspirations or ejaculatory Prayers in the Books of devotion, and the practice of it is by so much more estimable, as it appears by St. *Austin* and by *Cassian*, that it was one of the principal devotions of those *Egyptian* Monasticks, who have made use of this model before all others. *In Epist. ad Probram.* 'Tis reported, saith this Doctor, that the *Egyptian Monasticks* make prayers very frequently, but very short, and make haste in some sort to send them up towards Heaven, for fear lest this attention which is so lively, so frequent, and so necessary in prayer, should come to slacken by a longer continuance.

CHAP. XI.

Means to keep our selves in the presence of God, which is to represent to our Souls the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

I Have on purpose reserved for the last of these means of keeping our selves in the presence of God, this which is the most counselled by those who have treated of a Spiritual life, that is, to have Jesus Christ always in our thoughts, by representing him according to his Humanity in some of his mysteries; that is to say, either as a Child, or as conversing with Men, or in some circumstance of his passion, or lastly, seated at the right hand of his Father, which is the state wherein the Apostle exhorts us to adore him.

We cannot in general doubt of the necessity of this practice, seeing that Christs Humanity is the true way to come to God. Also we see that the Church does what she can the year about to place Jesus Christ before our Eyes, in all the mysteries of his Mortal and Glorious life. *St. Paul* affirms particularly, that he had endeavoured to imprint in
the

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the Mind of the *Galatians* to lively an Idea of Jesus Christ suffering for us, that he did not fear to say that Jesus Christ had been Crucified before their Eyes: Gal. 3. v. 1. *Ante quorum Oculos Jesus Christus prescriptus est in vobis Crucifixus.* It also appeared that 'twas the devotion of the first Christians; which made St. *Clement* say, in the Elogium he made of the *Corinthians*, Epist. ad Cor. *That the sufferings of God were before their Eyes.*

'Tis, in particular, by this means that what St. *Austin* prescribed to the Ignoranter sort of Christians, may be practised. *Brethren*, said he, Aug. in Jo-an. tr. 2. *behold the counsel I give you. If you will live like Christians, cleave to Jesus Christ according to what he has undertaken for our Salvation, that so you may arrive at what he is by his divine Nature. And this is what he includes in this maxim, that the Spirits who are not as yet capable of conceiving the divinity, ought to cleave to the Cross, to the Passion, and to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and make use thereof as a Ship which may conduct them to what as yet they cannot see.*

But this consideration of Christs Humanity is not only necessary for

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mean, but very profitable for great Men. *The Cross of Christ*, as this holy Doctor says, in Joan. tr. 98. *is not only the Milk of Infants, but also the solid food of those who are advanced: Christus crucifixus & lac sugentibus & cibus proficientibus.* So there are none to whom it is not very useful, to have in Mind Christs Humanity. And therefore St. Bernard counsels to pronounce without intermission the name of Jesus, to renew in the Mind the Idea of Jesus Christ God and Man. *I cannot*, saith he in Cant. Ser. 15. n. 6, and 7. *taste any writing, if I find not therein the name of Jesus. I cannot suffer discourses, if I do not hear the name of Jesus spoken of. Jesus is Milk in our Mouths; he is agreeable Musick to our Ears. He is a source of Joy in our Hearts. He is a Physician for all our Diseases. If any one find himself sad, let him think of the name of Jesus, and let it pass from his Mind into his Mouth. Nothing is more proper than this name to repress the impetuosity of wrath, and to dissipate the swelling of Pride, to heal the wounds of Envy, to stop all the dissolution of intemperance, to extinguish the flames of concupiscence, to qualify the thirst of avarice, to separate us from all shameful passions.*
Behold

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Behold, O my Soul! the excellent remedy which you have in reserve in the vessel of this sacred Name; a remedy so wholesom, that there is not any Disease which gives not place thereto.

This is the profit St. Bernard found by thinking continually on Jesus Christ. For it would be nothing to pronounce the name of Jesus without thinking of him. But 'tis not necessary for that to have always the Image of him painted in the Imagination, which is impossible for those who have it not, and dangerous for those who have it too lively. That which this Saint then recommends to us, is, to have Jesus Christ present in our Minds. Now we may think of Jesus Christ without imagining him to our selves. The imagination is nothing but a source for the thought. What if it should be found, that it were an obstacle by applying the Mind too much; either it should be moderated in the use, or else entirely banisht; there being certain persons to whom the lively representation of the mysteries of Jesus Christ known by the imagination, might be a Subject of illusion and temptation, and to whom by consequence we ought to give counsel

not to conceive them, but by faith; as St. Francis Sales observes in one of his Letters. *Book 2. Let. 22.*

Lastly, as the World attracts us continually by all the Objects it presents to us, and the Devil has a thousand tricks to fix us to, and to fill us with them, so Piety ought to render us ingenious in finding means to fix us to God. And 'tis by these sorts of inventions, whereof it is spoken in the Scripture, that the just live and are nourish'd. *Dicite iuste quoniam bene, quoniam fructum ad inventionem suarum comedit.*

CHAP. XII.

That one of the greatest means of keeping our selves in the presence of God, is, to manage by Prayer all the interval of Actions.

AS Bodies are almost never so perfectly joyn'd, but that there is always some little intervals fill'd with air, which separates them, so we cannot make so continued a series of Actions, but there will remain some small vacuities; and these vacuities which are sometimes necessary

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cessary for the freeing the Mind, may be usefully fill'd with some Prayers which would not oblige to a great attention, which would terminate rightly the precedent Actions, and prepare those which follow.

But Men have so little care of their Spiritual advancement, that generally there is nothing worse employed than that time which might be the best. For those vacancies are oftentimes only fill'd with vain thoughts and useless reflections; and 'tis by this means principally that the Devil casts so much venom into the Soul, finding le's entrance there into when the Soul is busied.

Every one ought to accustom himself to mannage for God these small times; to raise, for example, his Spirit to God, when his sleep is interrupted in the Night, when he awakes in the Morning, when he is dressing himself, and when he goes from one place to another. He would find by this means considerable times for prayer, and he would not have cause to complain so much that he is over-tow'd with labour, and that he can find no time to bestow on God and himself.

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I know very well that Nature, which searcheth every where its ease, will find it self charged, if it were made subject to a new attention in these intervals; and that it had rather give it self over to thoughts which come of themselves, and which seize it as soon as it applies it self to them: But if this practice is laborious at the beginning, it would become much less at the end; and there are likewise many prayers which weary the Mind less, than certain thoughts whereunto we abandon our selves in the vacuities. After all, we cannot weary our selves about any thing more useful, than to stop the entrance of the heart from the Devil; to purifie our Actions, and to nourish and sustain the Soul in the continual need she hath to repair her spiritual forces, which are enervated as well as those of the Body, by the continuity of Actions.

'Tis by these means, and by all others that I have described in this Treatise, that the advice *S. Paul* gives us of praying always, may be practised. *Sine intermissione orate.* And by the practice of this advice we are prepared in an excellent manner for particular prayers which we make at certain times, because we find

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find our selves absolutely disposed there-
to when this time is come, and we
have already before-hand the principal
end of these prayers, seeing that we
choose not these times for prayer in a
more expresse manner, but only that the
unction we receive thereby may be
spread through all our Actions, and
may cause at the end of our lives a con-
tinual prayer.

CHAP. XIII.

*That the Practice of Christian Vigilance
includes that of recollection.*

Here is nothing that all those who
prescribe Rules for the guide of
Souls, who aspire to a more perfect
life than the generality of Christians, do
recommend to them more, than what
they call recollection, and they make
deservedly the ground-Work of this
Christian perfection, to which they
pretend to incline them, it being im-
possible that a Spirit dissipated and eva-
porated can ever make any progress in
virtue.

But

But it would not be a small fault, nor an inconsiderable illusion, to believe this virtue necessary only for certain Souls, more elevated and more perfect, and to believe that it is not for the common sort of Christians. For if Vigilance be a general virtue, and if it be for all Christians that Jesus Christ said, *Watch and pray lest ye fall into temptation:* 'Tis also all Christians that he orders to be recollected, and not to be dissipated, seeing that the practice of Vigilance includes that of recollection, and that 'tis impossible to watch and not to be recollected.

This is what is very easy to be comprehended, by considering what is understood by recollection. There is an interior and an exterior one. The exterior consists in the retention of the senses, in keeping silence and solitude as much as we can, in avoiding tumults and multiplicity of affairs, and principally those which dissipate and draw us out of our selves. The interior, consists in not entertaining our selves with vain and frivolous thoughts; in being attentive to God; in standing before him in a kind of continual adoration, in being busied about good thoughts,

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thoughts, and principally about those which may serve us for Rules to do all our Actions in the sight of God.

It is evident now, that all we have said hitherto is nothing but the practice of inward recollection. For we cannot be more profitably recollected, than in adoring God inwardly in all Places, and in all Creatures, in hearkening to what he says, in consulting his pleasure, in beholding him always as our only Protector, and our only Refuge in all temptations which attack us, in watching all our motions as well exterior as interior.

But it is clear, that this recollection, which is inward, inclines us of it self to the outward. For if we consult Gods Law in the use we ought to make of our senses, we shall cut off presently all the use of sense, which only tends to pleasure, and which hath no necessity.

'Tis not a counsel of perfection.
'Tis the Eternal and unchangeable Law of God, which obliges Man to love none but him, to delight only in him; to make use of Creatures, but with the moderation of him who makes use of them, and not with the passion of him who enjoys them: *Uentis modestia non amantis*

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amantis affectu. We must not then believe that 'tis permitted to any to let loose the Reins of his senses, how innocent soever the Objects may be. For 'tis sufficient that the pleasures be not necessary, to abstain from them; and this moderation, so necessary for all the World, does not only regard Eating and Drinking, but also all other sensual Objects. There must always be some other reason than that of seeking our proper satisfaction to excuse the use of it. And so whosoever hath a care to have Gods Law before their Eyes, and to follow it in their Actions, are obliged to be very circumspect in the manner of taking use of their senses.

All Christians are obliged to pray, and those who live in the World are in some sort more obliged thereunto than others, because they have more strong temptations to combat, being exposed to greater perils, and having need of greater helps from God. They are then obliged to avoid what may hinder the efficaciousness of their prayers, being 'tis by these prayers they must obtain this help and assistance. And as there is nothing more opposite to a spirit of prayer, than the diffusion of
the

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the Soul into the senses; and as 'tis the ordinary source of those distractions which corrupt our prayers, and which make them incapable of pleasing God, the same Obligation which binds them to pray, obliges them also to preserve their Souls from this dissipation.

What I have newly said of the evaporation of the Soul by the senses, may be applied to the dissipation which ariseth from Words. All the World is obliged to fly it, seeing 'tis not only to the perfect to whom it is said, they shall give an account at the day of Judgment of their unprofitable and unnecessary Words, but generally speaking to all Mankind.

Whosoever therefore hath this Law of God before their Eyes, reduce themselves as much as they can to silence. Avoid frivolous conversations. Are persuaded, as the *Apostle saith*, that they ought to speak only before God and in Jesus Christ. And by the attention they have upon all their Words and Actions, they retrench all that tends not to God, and that springs not from his Spirit.

Now by retrenching both unprofitable diversions and discourses, we are reduced by a necessary consequence

to

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to a kind of solitude, being we scarce go out from thence but through a desire to be entertained with Men, or to feed our selves with the sights, and other Objects of the senses.

In fine, there are some common Duties to be included in this Employ, not to charge our selves with too diffusing affairs without necessity, not to undertake what we cannot accomplish with a Spirit of prayer, to do all our Actions through some considerations of God, and not through Human and Worldly intentions. For 'tis to all mankind that this advice of the wise Man is addressed, that we must not puzzle our selves in a multitude of Actions. *Fili non in multis sint Actus tui.* 'Tis to all mankind that 'tis forbidden to overburthen themselves. And lastly, 'tis to all mankind that 'tis commanded to do all for the honour of Jesus Christ, and to love God with all their hearts, which obliges them to do nothing but for him, and by the motives of his love.

'Tis very true that this recollection ought to be practised differently, according to the different conditions, because it consists not in avoiding all the Words, and all the Affairs, and all the Companies,

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Companies, and all the Objects of the senses, but in keeping our selves, in respect of all these things, within the boundaries of necessity, and proportion to their inward forces.

But it would be also an error to believe that we might not be recollected without an entire silence, an entire retreat, an actual separation from all Objects of the senses, and from all Affairs. Thus 'tis visible, that being vigilant over our selves, as we have already said, we practice recollection as much as is necessary to satisfy the duty of Christianity, and to arrive even at the most eminent perfection.

CHAP. XIV.

That Christian Vigilance inclines us to the exercise of all Virtues, and that 'tis also an excellent preparatory to Prayer.

CHRISTIAN Virtue consisting in the practice of its Duties, in overcoming Temptations which dissuade us from them, and in doing the one and the other in consideration of God, and for the love of Justice, it is evident

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dent, that what places this justice before our Eyes, what discovers these temptations, what makes us watchful over the motions of the heart, which are the source of our good Actions, and our falls according to the Gospel, what shews us at last from whence we may be able to obtain the succour which is necessary to uphold us in the exercise of all Christian virtues, doth engage us as it were necessarily to practice them.

This is what will be yet comprehended, if we consider that those who have a true desire to addict themselves perfectly to God, are commonly dissuaded from practising them only because they do not think of them, and because they do not apply themselves to distinguish the occasions of them. For having always a fountain of an evil Vigilance which opens their Eyes to seek their pleasures, and their interests, which is Concupiscence, they cannot hinder this ill Principle from dragging them by another Vigilance, which sets them as guard against all these diligent enquiries of self love. So whosoever is not Vigilant to mortifie himself, does not mortifie himself at all. For he
never

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never fails to perceive the occasions wherein his Senses and his Mind may find some pleasure, but he never perceives the occasions of mortifying them. 'Tis what Nature never makes us think of. So that it may be alledged as a certain truth, that a dissipated life is an unmortified life, and in which is mingled consequently an infinite secret enquiries about the satisfaction of the senses, the delights of the Body, and what may be able to satisfy Vanity.

What I have said of mortification, may be said of all other Virtues. We do not practice them at all, when we do not watch. And Concupiscence on the contrary, whose time is always ready, is never slack in acting when we are unmindful to hinder it. Thus for want of attention and Vigilance we lose a thousand occasions of exercising Christian virtues, even when we have a desire to do it in our Hearts.

'Tis by this means yet that Vigilance is an excellent disposition to prayer; for all virtues prepare thereunto, and all faults are obstacles. The Union we have with our Neighbour, the desire of their welfare as of our own, the bearing with their faults, the forgetting, or
even

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the agreeableness for what they have done which might displease us, Charity for the Church, and for its Members, the Zeal for the Glory of God, the desire and eagerness for eternal Goods; all other virtues likewise, how good they may be in themselves, are employed to Rule the outward Man, as circumspection in speech, modesty in the countenance, mortification of all the senses; all these virtues, say, prepare for prayer, and render it more fervent. On the contrary, according to St. *Ambrose*, in *Psal.* 128. sins burthen the Soul, and keep us separated from God, by hindering us from raising our selves up to him. *Peccata ravescit oratio, & longe fit a Deo.*

Saint *Bernard* does attribute particularly this ill effect to the sins of the Tongue and unprofitable discourses. *There is not any instrument, saith he, more proper to drain the Heart, than the Tongue; and I think in that the conscience of many among you renders Testimony of what I say; for which of you is so perfect that he has not felt, after long discourses, his Mind empty, his Meditations without devotion, the affections of his Heart dry and withered, and his prayer without unction,*
be-

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because of the words he had spoken or understood?

Not only the practice of virtues disposes us to pray, but it is even a prayer and a praising God, according to St. *Austin*. How, saith this Doctor, can a Man have the force to praise God all the day long? I am going to teach you the secret. Let all you do be well done, and you will praise God. *Quidquid egertis bene ago, & laudasti Deum.*

CHAP. XV.

An Answer to a difficulty concerning divers means of keeping our selves in the presence of God.

I Do not question but those who shall read what has been written in this Treatise, have been often struck with this thought, that 'tis very hard and even impossible to make all these reflections amongst a croud of Employments wherewith most part of the World are overwhelmed, and that if we should be troubled to apply our Minds to so many different prospects, by dwelling solitary in the house, and endeavouring to recollect our selves as much as possible we could, it is yet much more difficult to do it in the dissipation which is almost inseparable from a Worldly life, and in the application that we are obliged to have for the affairs which employ us therein.

And indeed we cannot deny but that these practices cause some constraint, above all at the beginning, seeing they ought to hinder the Mind from following its Natural propensity, to recall it often from its strayings which are agreeable to it, to apply it to some Objects which it hath a sensible dislike for, and to interrupt oftentimes that which it finds in those which are most familiar with it. But the difficulty thereof will appear notwithstanding much less, if we comprehend well whereunto its reduced. For

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For we must not imagin, that at each Action we ought to make these reflections in a distinct, clear and extended manner. We pretend only that we must render them familiar, by express considerations in those times that St. Bernard advises to set a part every day for *consideration*, that we may be able to recall them all the day long, by looking upon them with a confused look, but sufficient yet to Rule our Actions, and to keep us in the presence of God.

They are not then so many express thoughts which we advise, but remains of thoughts; whereof David said, *Reliquia cogitationum diem festum agent tibi*. And this is what is no way troublesome to us in things which make a lively impression upon our hearts. For they present themselves to our Minds in the midst of our Employes; they shew themselves whether we will or no, and we have much more trouble to rid our selves of, than to apply our selves to them.

When a Painter hath learnt the Rules of his Art, and strongly imprinted them in his imagination, he needs only to cast an Eye, to guide himself in his Works. It is not necessary that he run through this consequence of precepts which he did when he learned them, nor that he make long discussions in his Mind. He sees at first his Rule, and he follows it even without unfolding what he sees. The Mind has a way of Acting by it self much more prompt than that it makes appear to others in speaking to them: and oftentimes this long consequence of Words is nothing but the expressing of what it hath conceived at once and in an instant.

It is the same with all other Arts which we exercise or put in practice. The Precepts which we have learnt with care and study guide afterwards our Actions, and become so present by the exercise, that we hardly distinguish the sight
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we have had of them, and it hinders not the Mind from applying it self to every thing else. It would be the same in respect of those considerations which ought to help us to govern our Actions, if we made our Art, our Trade, or our Profession to live like Christians, and if we were well perswaded that we had nothing to do but to follow God, and to rule our life by what he has made us know of his pleasure in the Gospel.

But as to follow the Rules of Art with facility, it is necessary to have learnt them carefully and laboriously; likewise to follow Gods truths with some ease in the conduct of this life, it is necessary to have learnt them with a laborious application, and not to be discouraged at the difficulties which may be met with therein.

And this is what ought to make us blush in this point of our curiosity. We would have the most important thing of the World, or rather the only important thing which may be in the World, to cost us nothing. We would find God without seeking him; know all truths without giving our selves the trouble to learn them, and be Master of our selves and thoughts, without having had occasion for all that to do our selves any violence.

This is not the ordinary conduct of God over Man. He is found only by those who seek with pains; he only puts into our Minds upon occasions the truths we have need of; and his design in that, is, to hide himself in respect of us, to take from us the Idea of a supernatural Conduct; and thereby to keep us in a low way, conform to the weakness of our virtue.

So to practice profitably all these means which we have proposed to keep our selves in the presence of God, we ought often to meditate on them by express considerations, and render them present to our selves in such a manner, that we may have
nothing

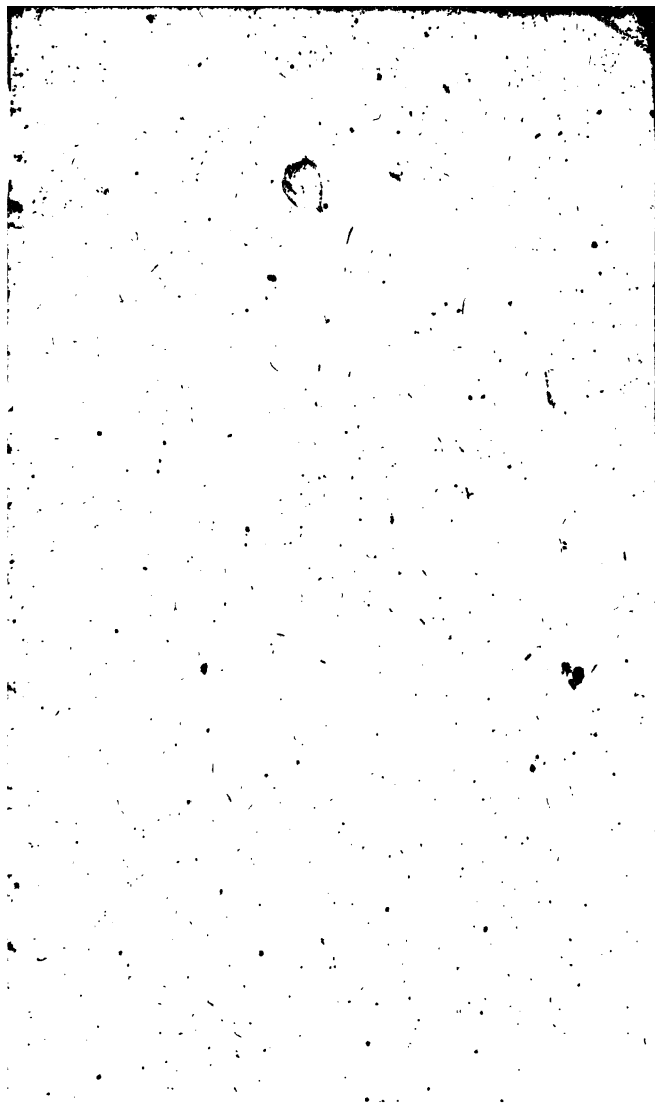
408 Of Christian vigilance.

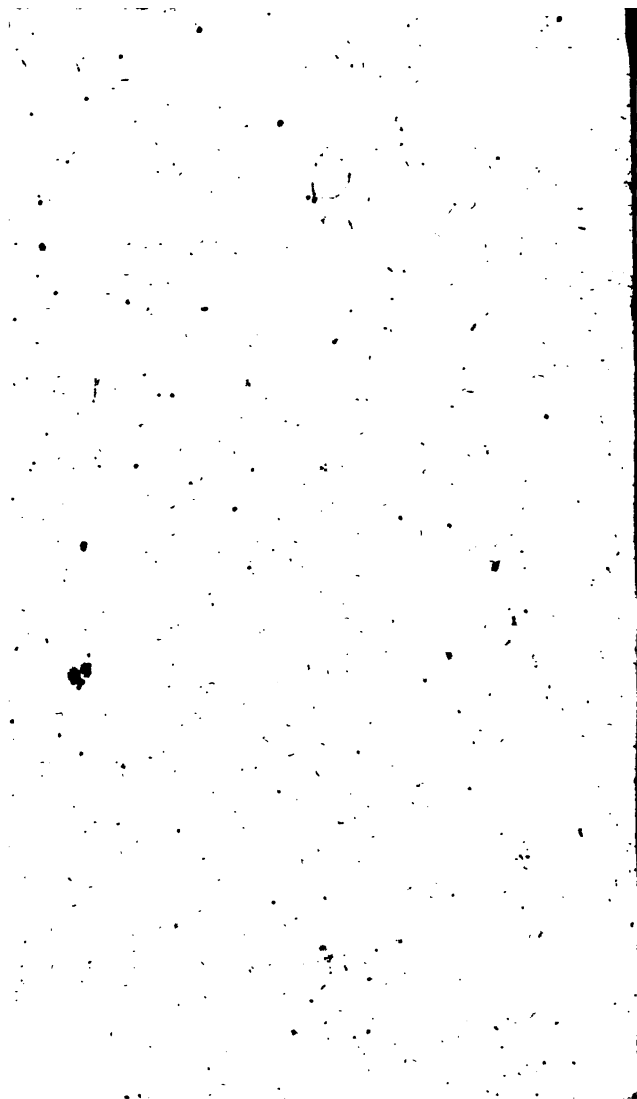
Nothing to do but to cast our Eyes upon them from time to time, to renew them all at once in our Minds.

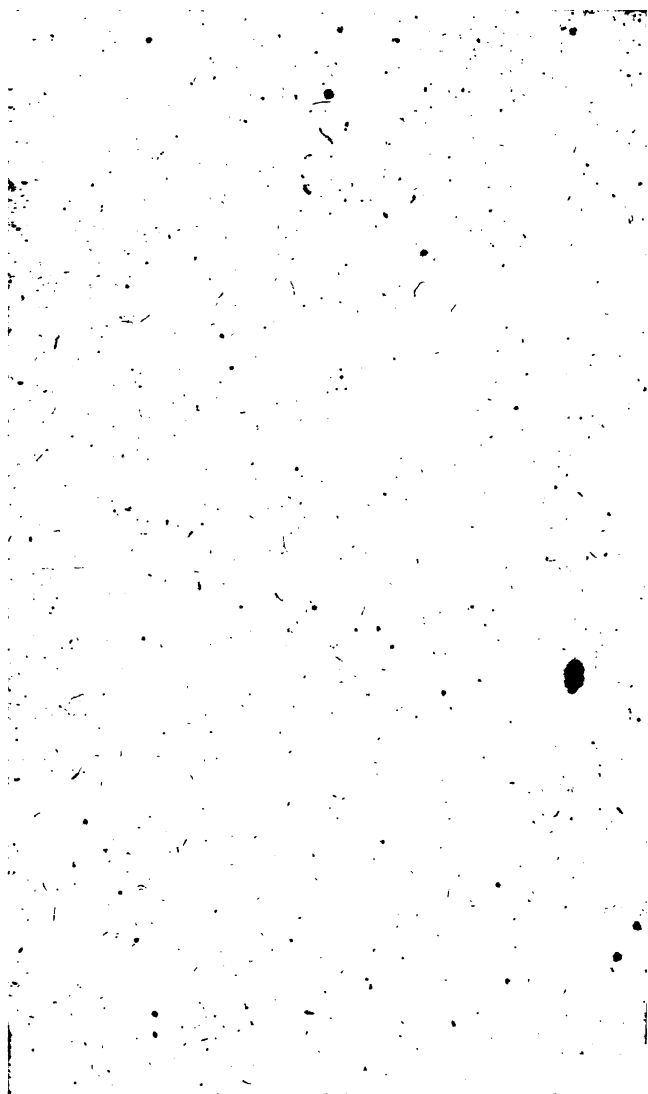
Likewise we must not pretend, that God ought presently to make us enjoy them, and we ought to esteem our selves too happy, that he does us that favour of labouring therein our whole life, without disheartning us with the faults which we shall commit there, not for our small advancement. Provided that when God shall take us out of this World, he find us yet bent to seek out his justice; we ought to hope he will finish the rest in the other World. Now this diligent scrutiny is to seek and find out a means to have God always present in our Actions, and to endeavour to walk before his face, seeing that 'tis practising what the Prophet recommends to us by these Words. *Querite Dominum et confirmemini, querite faciem eius semper.*

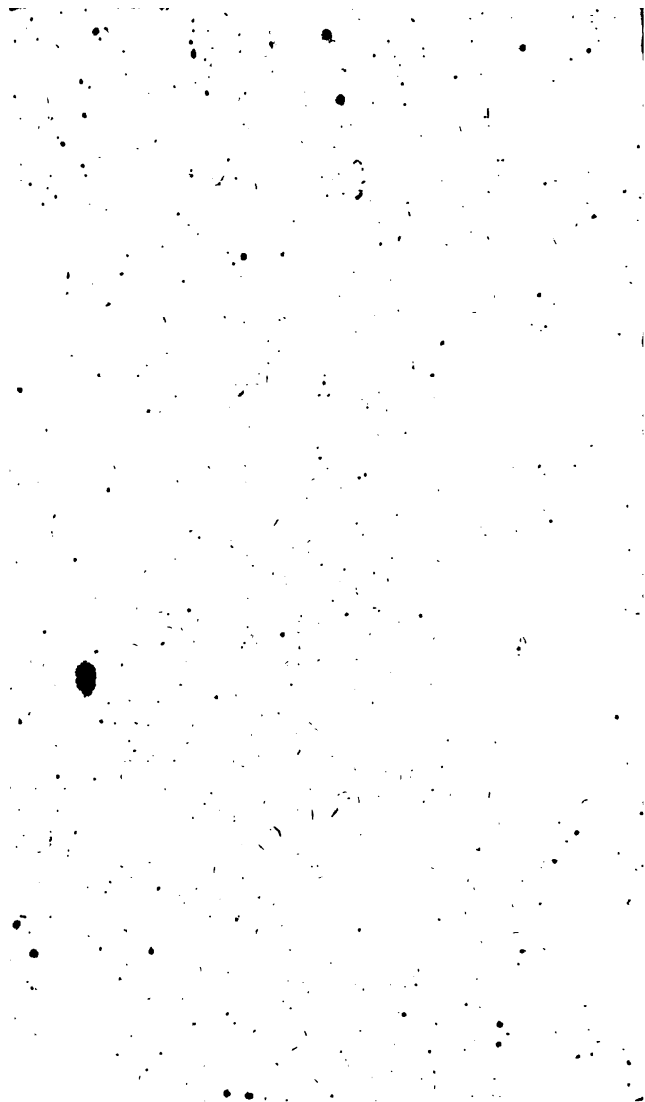
It will not be amiss to advertise, that when we recommend here to make some endeavour to keep our selves in the presence of God, and to apply our selves all day long to the divers means we have given to practice this exercise, we do not pretend to counsel a violent application, 'tis enough to turn mildly the Mind towards God by the different ways we have proposed, without discovering at each regard what will be presently discovered, except it be in the occasions we shall doubt of what we ought to do, in which case it is good to desist, that we may not act with inconstancy and by hazard. But besides that, a meer look and a simple elevation to God is enough, not only to Rule our Actions, but oftentimes also to obtain for us new lights, and to discover in Objects which shall present to us new truths, to which we have not as yet applied our thoughts.

F I N I S.









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